

# ICOM Serbia



MUSEUMS AS CULTURAL HUBS  
THE FUTURE OF TRADITION

# MUSEUMS AS CULTURAL HUBS

## The Future of Tradition

**May 13-19, 2019**



MUSEUMS **FOR** **MC**

**10**

# MUSEUMS OF SERBIA

International Museum Day - European Night of Museums - National Museum Week



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# Jubilee Year

This year, museum professionals will gather at the jubilee, 25<sup>th</sup> ICOM General Conference in magical Kyoto. There is plenty of symbolism in the fact that the Land of the Rising Sun is hosting 3,000 participants who are going to discuss important issues of concern to the international museum community. This will be the right opportunity for the new museum definition to “rise” so as to reflect the changed role of museums which have developed a closer bond with the audience and become a more active part of the community they belong to.



The central theme of this year's Conference, *Museums as Cultural Hubs: The Future of Tradition*, was exactly the thread that bonded museums all over Serbia during the event *Museums for 10*, coordinated by ICOM Serbia. For the fifth time, the largest museum initiative in Serbia presented museums as places where creativity and knowledge unite, and visitors take an active part in creating and exchanging ideas, and interact with each other, prioritizing the quality of knowledge exchange and development of critical awareness of major issues.

The focus on the audience serves as a particularly significant guideline of cultural policies and a vital part of the strategic plan of contemporary museums. Understanding the audience and its development are key elements in making museums sustainable.

In the year marking the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of NC ICOM Serbia, the successor of the former ICOM Yugoslavia, by decision of the Ministry of Culture and Information of the Republic of Serbia of 14<sup>th</sup> January 2019, NC ICOM Serbia gained the status of a representative cultural association. This is a great honour but even a greater commitment stimulating us to tackle, yet with more responsibility and enthusiasm, the tasks of relevance, not only for our profession but also for wider cultural audiences. By gaining the status of a representative association and having NC ICOM Serbia magazine enlisted in the Media Register of the Serbian Business Registers Agency, we have achieved major aims adopted at ICOM Serbia Annual Assembly meeting.

**Slavko Spasić**

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# Redefined future of tradition

This jubilee, 25<sup>th</sup> ICOM's triennial gathering to be held in the old capital of Japan – Kyoto – will gather more than 3,000 museum professionals from all over the world. In addition to numerous current topics of interest, the conference will primarily focus on the new definition of museum and its role in a dynamically changing world

Text: Angelina Banković / Photos: ICOM General Conference Kyoto 2019 Organizing Committee





This year, ICOM General Conference will be held in Kyoto, Japan from 1<sup>st</sup> to 7<sup>th</sup> September 2019. Some 3,000 participants are expected from all over the world. They will be able to hear and exchange opinions on museum-related ideas, news and issues. During the conference week, through sessions, debates, workshops and excursions, the participants will learn about current museum trends and developments in Japan, and the experiences of their Japanese colleagues, as well as of those coming from other parts of the world.

The theme of this year's conference is *Museums as Cultural Hubs: The Future of Tradition*, and the events will be organized throughout the seven days. The first and the last day, 1<sup>st</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> September, will be dedicated to the meetings of Advisory Council and ICOM International committees, and the closing

## ICOM General Conferences

Since 1948, every three years, ICOM gathers the international museum community around a theme of crucial interest for culture- and museum-related work to facilitate cultural exchange, to promote international cooperation, and to inspire new ideas and actions. In order to allow museums to continue their public service mission to the society. Each conference is also home to the International Museum Fair, where suppliers and museums showcase their latest projects and products. General conferences also organize speeches by world-renowned professionals on multidisciplinary subjects concerning the international museum community, as well as scientific discussions on the conference theme among ICOM's International Committees and also administrative sessions to summarize and evaluate the actions conducted over the past three-year period.

ceremony. Workshops, conferences, panel discussions and the Museums Fair and Expo Forum will be held from 2<sup>nd</sup> to 4<sup>th</sup> September, as all-day programmes. Day 5 is reserved for off-site meetings of ICOM Committees, and excursions are scheduled for day 6.

During the three days of conferences, workshops and panels, numerous museum-related topics will be covered. The first day will mostly be committed to museums and sustainable development, on the second day there will be discussions about the current museum defini-

tion and potentials for a new definition, and the third day will be devoted to Asian museums and art collections, both in Japan and worldwide. There will also be several panels on different topics, including *Decolonisation and Restitution – Moving towards a More Holistic Perspective and Relational Approach* (2<sup>nd</sup> September) and *Museum and Local Development* (4<sup>th</sup> September). Major plenary sessions include *Curating Sustainable Futures through Museums* (2<sup>nd</sup> September) and *Museums in Times of Disaster* (4<sup>th</sup> September). The scheduled workshops have most valuable subjects for the participants. They include the workshop about publishing and writing where the study group will have the opportunity to learn about writing techniques and how to get their work published in scholarly and professional publications (2<sup>nd</sup> September) and *Digital and Smart* about creating and running communications campaigns and partnerships (3<sup>rd</sup> September). In addition to this, a large number of ICOM International Committees will get together to hold conferences each day. In 2018, most of them issued a call for publications and presentations on different topics, including: *The Future of Tradition in Museology* to be discussed by the International Committee for Museology; *The Future of Tradition in the Arts, East and West* to be discussed by the International Committee for Museums and Collections of Decorative Arts and Design; *Transforming Museum Communications for a Changing World* to be discussed by the International Committee for Marketing and Public Relations; *What is the Essence of Conservation?* to be jointly organized by ICOM Committee for Conservation and the International Committee for Museology; *Regional Museums Encouraging Sustainable Use of Cultural and Natural Heritage* to be discussed by International Committee for Regional Museums; *University Museums and Collections as Cultural Hubs: the Future of Tradition* to be discussed by the International Committee for University Museums and Collections, as well as many others.

On day 6, Sunday, 6<sup>th</sup> September, the participants will have the chance to go on excursions and explore the city and the prefecture of Kyoto, as well as the nearby region. Two additional post-conference programmes will be organized on 8–10 September, which include visits to prefectures Hokkaido and Okinawa.

Only a glimpse at this programme schedule of ICOM's 25<sup>th</sup> General Conference is enough to convince one that all of the participants, either as speakers or members of the audience, will have the opportunity to get to know different aspects of museum activities worldwide and to see and learn much about the host country, Japan, its tradition and culture.



## Speakers at ICOM's 25<sup>th</sup> General Conference in Kyoto

The participants will be addressed by a keynote speaker on each one of the three days dedicated to conferences, panels and workshops. The first is the world-renowned Japanese architect and professor Kengo Kuma. Standing out among his numerous projects in Japan and around the world is Suntory Museum of Art in Tokyo. The next speaker is Sebastião Salgado, a French award-winning photographer originally from Brazil, a member of the Académie des Beaux-Arts of Institut de France and an honorary member of the Academy of Arts and Sciences in USA. Salgado is currently working on a photographic project on the theme of the Brazilian Amazon forest and its inhabitants. This work will be presented in the form of books and exhibitions in 2021. The last keynote speaker to address the audience is the Chinese multimedia artist Cai Guo-Qiang, best known for the innovative use of gunpowder in his projects and performances involving explosions. He has received numerous awards and honours, including the Golden Lion at the Venice Biennale in 1999.

# Triple celebration of Serbian museum professionals

On 16<sup>th</sup> May this year in Belgrade there was a triple celebration marking the International Museum Day - from the visit of ICOM President Suay Aksoy to the presentation of awards to the most successful museums and individuals

Test: Tamara Ognjević / Photos: VR Photo Team and Vladimir Vukadinović

In the year celebrating all kinds of museum-related anniversaries, our committee had many reasons for celebration. First of all, we were delighted by the news that the President of the International Council of Museums (ICOM) Suay Aksoy would pay a visit to Serbia and the local museum community at the invitation of ICOM Serbia National Committee within the programme of the Regional Alliance of ICOM for South-East Europe (RA ICOM SEE); then, there was the presentation of ICOM annual awards to the museum of the year, to the best professional, the best project and the best publication in 2018, as well as certificates of appreciation to all the outstanding



individuals for their past and present support to the museums in our country. Finally, the "Museum for 10" award was presented at the event "Museums for 10"; as of this year, it is coordinated by ICOM Serbia which has

been providing its active support to this event ever since its launch five years ago.

We had a festive and joyful ceremony at the National Museum in Belgrade, and also an interesting and quite beneficial gathering and talk with one of the leading museologists in the world, Suay Aksoy, at the National Museum in Belgrade, the Historical Museum of Serbia, the Museum of Contemporary Art, the Nikola Tesla Museum and the Aeronautical Museum, which were visited by ICOM President during

her stay in the Serbian Capital. Suay Aksoy talked to Serbian colleagues about the current process of redefining the role of museums in the ever-changing world, invited them to take a more active role in the work of ICOM international committees and thanked us for being given the honour of presenting ICOM annual awards to the laureates.

This year, the competition for ICOM awards was tougher than ever since we had remarkable nominees, which made it more difficult to decide who was the best of the best!

Our congratulations go to our colleagues from the National Museum in Belgrade who won ICOM award for the museum of the year and the publication of the year. We also congratulate our colleague Žužana Korhec Pap, PhD, from the Municipal Museum in Subotica on the award for the museum professional of the year 2018, and our colleagues Aleksandar Petijević and Suzana Milovanović from the Museum of Vojvodina for the Project of the Year award!

We also extend our congratulations to the Museum of Krajina in Negotin, the City Museum of Novi Sad, the Museum of Theatrical Arts in Belgrade, the National Museum Zrenjanin and the National Museum Leskovac on the "Museum for 10" award for the year 2018 given to the most creative programmes organized during the "Museums for 10" event.

## Suay Aksoy, the guest of ICOM Serbia



Suay Aksoy, President of the International Council of Museums (ICOM), the largest museum association gathering more than 300,000 professionals all around the world, was a guest of ICOM Serbia National Committee from 15<sup>th</sup> to 17<sup>th</sup> May. This was a tremendous honour and a great pleasure for us since we had the opportunity to exchange opinions and ideas with one of the most respectable museologists of our time.

Pleased with what she saw and heard during her stay in Belgrade (she was given a tour of the National Museum in Belgrade, the Historical Museum of Serbia, the Nikola Tesla Museum, the Museum of Contemporary Art and the

Aeronautical Museum), she promised to come again so that she could visit some of the museums outside the capital, as well.

Today, ICOM Serbia National Committee, the successor of the former ICOM Yugoslavia, with more than 300 individual and 13 institutional members, is a leader among the regional national committees and one of the founders of the Regional Alliance of ICOM for South-East Europe, which initiated this visit. Besides Belgrade, Suay Aksoy also visited Ljubljana and ICOM Slovenia. From there, her tour continued to Zagreb where she was welcomed by our Croatian colleagues. Finally, her tour ended with a visit to Sarajevo and ICOM Bosnia and Herzegovina.

We did our best to be good hosts and need not mention how much we appreciate the praises and constructive criticism by this distinguished, committed expert.





### Winners of the ICOM award for 2018

This year's winners of ICOM annual award for 2018 include: *National Museum in Belgrade* for the institution of the year; *Žužana Korhec Pap*, PhD, conservator-restorer, museum advisor at the Municipal Museum in Subotica, for the professional of the year; *The Forgotten Wonderworker – the Cult of Saint Spyridon in Serbian Traditional Culture* (project implemented by the Museum of Vojvodina; authors: Aleksandar Petijević, museum advisor – ethnologist, and Suzana Milovanović, museum advisor – historian, Museum of Vojvodina) for the project of the year; and the National Museum in Belgrade for the monograph *100 years of Trebenishte*, as the publication of the year.

We had an incredibly tough competition for ICOM awards this year!

Other nominees included the *Museum of African Art* in Belgrade for the institution of the year; *Jelena Ognjanović* (Gallery of Matica Srpska) and *Stefan Žarić* (Artis Center), two young, talented and hard-working colleagues with significant results in international collaboration were nominated for the professional of the year. There were as many as six projects in the race for the award: *Perceptions: Women Tailored to Society?* of the Gallery of Matica Srpska; *Novel of a Lifetime – Arthur Munk*

*Exhibition*; contemporary art festival *Danube Dialogues 2018*, Novi Sad; *The Mediterranean in the Artworks from Pavle Beljanski Collection*, Pavle Beljanski Memorial Collection, Novi Sad; *The Forgotten Wonderworker – the Cult of Saint Spyridon in Serbian Traditional Culture* of the Museum of Vojvodina and *Treasures and Emperors. The Splendour of Roman Serbia* of the National Museum in Belgrade. In addition to the awarded publication of the National Museum in Belgrade, the other nominee in this category was the monograph *Measures of the City. Maps and plans from the Collection of Architecture and Urbanism of the Belgrade City Museum* written by *Zlata Vuksanović-Macura* and *Angelina Banković*, and published by the Belgrade City Museum.

For their active contribution to the work and popularization of museums in the past year, ICOM Serbia presented certificates of appreciation to: *Vuk Nenezić*, VR Photo Team, Belgrade; *Radio Beseda*, the Eparchy of Bačka information service, Novi Sad; *Milica Dimitrijević*, PhD, a journalist of the *Politika* daily newspaper; *Sonja Ćirić*, a journalist and culture editor at the *Vreme* weekly magazine; *Maja Tucaković*, a journalist and culture editor at the Radio Television of Serbia; and *Biljana Bralušić*, a journalist and culture editor at the Radio Television of Serbia.

# Leadership as a creative attitude

In mid-May this year, ICOM President Suay Aksoy was a guest of the Serbian National Committee of ICOM. This was an opportunity to do an interview with her which features a summary of her first term of office as the head of the largest museum association in the world

Interview by: Tamara Ognjević / Photos: Vuk Nenezić, VR Photo Team



**A**t the start of our conversation, I would like to remind you of a thought you expressed at your inauguration speech in Milan in 2016 – the thought that leadership is not a position but an attitude and ability to perceive and create momentum. It is three years now that you have been at the head of the largest museum association in the world. This period saw the launch of countless initiatives among which revising the museum definition is definitely the most delicate one. What is it that you as a leader have perceived and created during this period?

**Aksoy:** For me, the most important issue back then was and still is how to make museums and ICOM relevant in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The question of redefining the museum, that is, expanding its definition, is highly important in this context. I would rather say most important when one takes into account how much has been changed in the meantime and how much museums themselves have changed. First of all, I'm referring to the great changes in the society which automatically dictate the changes expected of museums. In this context, museums need to keep up with the ongoing changes and try to synchronize with them. ICOM has to play an extremely important role there. I personally contributed to the raising of the issue of redefining the museum back at the time I presided the Advisory Committee. In 2015, I invited doyens of museology, such as Bernice Murphy and Mark O'Neill, to put across the necessity of redefining the museum. These were all actions that lead to the establishment of a new Museum Definition, Prospects and Potentials (MDPP) Committee in 2017, dealing with the issue of revising the museum definition.

**Bearing in mind that museums are traditional institutions, often sealed against changes, how satisfied are you with the developments in redefining the museum? Despite the fact that we live in a global village, each community is specific and each museum is a kind of state for itself. How do colleagues react? What kind of feedback are you receiving?**

**Aksoy:** That's a very good question! The feedback, the information received about this subject are the most important. I have to say that the will to actively participate in this process gives me great pleasure since it was initially conceived as an inclusive and participative one. All around the world round tables on redefining the museum were organized – which is the process launched by MDPP. A series of



Suay Aksoy with our editor  
in the National Museum in Belgrade



conferences and symposiums were also held, with ICOFOM taking on a key role there. More than two thousand experts took part in this process, and last December all inputs resulting from this undoubtedly largest initiative in ICOM's history were presented to ICOM Executive Board. We then decided to start the process of revising the museum definition which would be proposed at the General Conference in Kyoto in September this year.

#### **Many national committees took part in proposing the new definition of museums?**

**Aksoy:** Yes, we've had an incredible response all over the world. We have received 175 proposals for the new definition of the museum and I have to say it is a fantastic museological map reflecting the deliberations on the museum and its role across the world. I would like to add that we were all particularly delighted with the fact that this initiative also engaged non-ICOM members – individuals and institutions – which clearly shows how significant this process is to the world museum community and to what extent it was recognized as vital.

**Although this huge response is pleasing and encouraging, we are aware that we are living in a world full of challenges with a lot of expectations imposed on museums. From historical revisionism, reassessing gender politics, wise action in the area of presentation and interpretation, decolonization, developing responsible relations**

**with politics and policies... We are also living in a world where electronic media are continuously changing our perception and consequently the expectations of the audience. To your knowledge, what is the greatest challenge for museums in such kind of setting?**

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Certain processes, such as decolonization, are too serious to be dealt with by any government alone. Museums need to get involved in these processes since I am sure no one can deal with such issues better than museums themselves.

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**Aksoy:** I think sustainability is still the greatest challenge. Social, economic sustainability... this is the biggest challenge for all museums worldwide. This is where ICOM needs to get involved even more than it has done so far. During my term of office, we established a working group on sustainability of museums. Their task is not only to identify the problems, but also to offer advice based on the UN Sustainable Development Goals blueprint as to how to reconcile the work of museums in a contemporary setting with key sustainability parameters.

**The museum is expected to be much more engaged in political processes. Do you think the**

**museum should take a more active part on that front?**

**Aksoy:** The museum as an institution enjoys great credibility. A large number of polls suggest so clearly. The public trusts the museum much more than media or governments. This is something that obliges the museum and puts it in the position to be much more socially engaged, to raise issues, to suggest how to approach specific problems. This is why the museum has to bring up the question of human rights, indigenous rights, gender issues... It is exactly because we are trusted that we have the obligation to be much louder and more present in society. Finally, the museum has always been in the service of society. I would say it might be its most important characteristic.

#### **You are running for a second term. What will be your priorities if you are re-elected?**

**Aksoy:** Sustainability, by all means. Then, the relationship between the museum and local community, and particularly the issue of decolonization. In Kyoto, we are going to hold two panels on decolonization, and next January in Africa ICOM is launching an initiative which will gather the representatives of colonized countries and their former colonists so that they could discuss the decolonization of heritage. This will be the first meeting of its kind in the history of the museum and the especially important thing is that this initiative has been started by ICOM.

# Musems as cultural hubs

The manifestation *Museums for 10* was held in May this year for the fifth time, and as of this year ICOM Serbia National Committee will officially act as the coordinator of this largest museum-related event in Serbia

Text: Slavko Spasić, Biljana Djordjević / Photos: Event archives

Gathering the largest part of the museum community in the country under the patronage of the Serbian Ministry of Culture and Information, the *Museums for 10* manifestation was held for the fifth time from 13<sup>th</sup> to 19<sup>th</sup> May 2019. Like on previous occasions, it included the International Museum Day, 15<sup>th</sup> European Night of Museums and National Week of Museums.

Over the course of these seven days, more than 150,000 visitors enjoyed free programmes organized by almost 80 museums and related institutions on more than 120 locations in 50 towns. In addition to exhibitions, most of which were introduced for the first time, the audience was able to participate in various additional presentations.

This year's theme – *Museums as Cultural Hubs: the Future of Tradition* – which was also the theme of the International Museum Day,

was focused on a new role of the museum as a place where creativity and knowledge bond and visitors are free to take part in creation, exchange ideas and interact with each other.

Since the limited space makes it impossible for us to report in detail about all the programmes organized during the event and the impressions they made on the audience, we will focus on a few of them which we think stood out.

The National Museum in Belgrade took part in the event for the first time in its full capacity. Besides the reopened permanent exhibition staged on three levels, the audience had the pleasure to see *Bernini's School* and the *Roman Baroque* guest exhibition. For this occasion, the museum provided frequent expert-guided tours and organized workshops for children and adults. The National Museum jubilee – its 175<sup>th</sup> anniversary – was marked with a series of lectures about its establishment and

growth. The crowd which impatiently stood in line to get into the museum during the European Night of Museums was thrilled to attend the performance of the students of the Mokranjac Musical School. Young virtuosos on the violin, cello and guitar performed chamber music surrounded by Serbian and foreign works of art from the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century. Owing to the musical programme, this space was given a new dimension, not experienced yet, while the ovations of the delighted audience echoed through the Atrium after each number, particularly after opera arias. The performance was such a success that the National Museum and Mokranjac Music School agreed to continue this practice in future.

In addition to the still ongoing exhibition *The End of the Great War 1917–1918* in the Historical Museum of Serbia, a theatre play *The Time of Honour and Pride* stirred intense emotions. It describes the great war-time and



National  
Museum Užice



Museum of Modern  
Art of Vojvodina,  
Novi Sad



personal friendship between two giants of Serbian history – Field Marshals Živojin Mišić and Stepa Stepanović.

The highlight of the programme in the Museum of Theatrical Arts of Serbia was the opening of a new exhibition *Bora Todorović in the Works of Aleksandar Popović and Dušan Kovačević*, marking the 90<sup>th</sup> anniversary of his birth and the 5<sup>th</sup> anniversary of his death. The crowd filled the not so spacious museum to capacity, wishing to recall some of the best performances of this brilliant actor.

Novi Sad, the town gathering without exception all its museums for this manifestation, offered the audience a variety of programmes – from workshops for making ancient Roman ladies' hairstyles at the Sremski Karlovci Hometown Collection (an annex to the Novi Sad City Museum), to a dance party at the Museum of Vojvodina – *Invitation to Twist under the Star-studded Sky* – and an open children's corner at the Pavle Beljanski Memorial Collection, to the exhibition of old timers and machines at the Port of Novi Sad. The exhibition *Djura Jakšić. Between Myth and Reality*, jointly staged by the Gallery of Matica Srpska and the National Museum in Belgrade, brought together more than forty works of art of our renowned artist from several museum collections in the Gallery of Matica Srpska in Novi

Sad. It featured a special two-day programme *Guest Painting* which offered the audience a chance to see Djura Jakšić's best-known portrait *The Girl in Blue*. At the same time, the audience at the National Museum in Belgrade was able to see the famous painting by Uroš Predić, *Sulking Girl*. Although an out of the ordinary practice for the museums in our country, it attracted special public attention.

Having organized such a grand museum festival and presented it to their town, the museums

of Novi Sad proved once again that outstanding results could be achieved through united efforts.

Šid did not fall behind Novi Sad at all. Its Museum of Naïve Art *Ilijanum* dedicated this year's event to music. There were several programmes involving the interaction of the audience with classical and popular music performed by Šid's school pupils and youth. At the *Sava Šumanović Gallery*, the visitors were delighted to see the masterpieces of our



National Museum  
in Belgrade

famous painter and enjoyed the musical performance which included the composition *Evening Clouds*, inspired by and named after Sava Šumanović's painting.

The Hometown Museum Petrovac na Mlavi had an exceptional attendance. Taking part in the workshop *Photomuseum*, the visitors were able to get a photo of themselves in a reconstructed photo studio from the 1930s, take a tour of a documentary exhibition *First Photographers of Petrovac*, and have a look at a display of spring mushrooms and taste mushroom stew.

In Ćuprija, the traditional demonstration of cherry tree cannon firing in the Museum's backyard drew the biggest crowd. They were also interested to see the multimedia segment of the permanent exhibition, featuring a 3D animation of a possible layout of the ancient town *Horreum Margi*.

In addition to the relevant activities in the town, the National Museum of Toplica in Prokuplje organized an unforgettable Neolithic scientific party at the archaeological site Pločnik where the youngest visitors learned how bread was baked and ore was smelted in ancient times.

The Center for Culture, Education and Information "Gradac" in Raška organized an extensive programme for its visitors. Along with the *Recital for Cello and Piano*, the audience was introduced with numerous cultural institutions: the Gallery of Matica Srpska, Novi Sad; the Museum of Rudnik and Takovo Region, Gornji Milanovac; the Museum of Spoon Sweets, Kraljevo; and the Museum of African Art, the Ethnographic Museum and the Museum of Applied Art, all from Belgrade. Such an intensive inter-museum cooperation was one of the reasons for launching the manifestation *Museums of Serbia, Ten Days from 10 to 10*, as it was initially called, and is one of the priority aims of the new-format manifestation now



Museum of Rudnik and Takovo region, Gornji Milanovac

titled "Museums for 10". So far, the staff of "Gradac" Cultural Centre in Raška have taken biggest steps to that end.

Besides its permanent exhibition, the Hometown Museum in Jagodina offered many creative workshops: *Archaeological Puzzle*; *Museum Items: Antiquities, Rarities, Exhibits, Cultural Goods*; *Life as a Collage*; *Pebbles of the Morava River*.

The visitors of all ages coming to the Museum of Ponišavlje, Pirot showed great interest and originality in creating the flow of its workshops *Narrate not to Forget*, *Wall of Memory*, *Batik Technique*. They were also able to see the exhibition *To Our People for Remembrance*. During the European Night of Museums, the audience enjoyed meeting the knights of the *Dragon Mane* knights' society based in Niš.

In addition to the usual programme offered throughout the manifestation, for the second year in a row the National Museum in Zrenjanin organized the prize game *Visitor – Detective*, and a photo prize contest. The audience

was also able to watch the film *Listen, Serbs! Archibald Reiss in Serbia 1914-2014*.

In the Museum of Rudnik and Takovo Region in Gornji Milanovac, the youngest visitors took part in the traditional tournament *Chess in the Museum*. They could play with giant chess figures all day while the children from kindergarten "Sun" prepared traditional and modern *Children's Party*.

All of the above programmes suggest that after five years of experience museums are becoming more and more creative in designing their offers, and also that the audience is keen to gain new knowledge, meet new challenges and see some forms of appropriate entertainment in museums. Ever since its establishment, this manifestation has gained its permanent audience which is quite sure of its wishes in terms of the offered content and willing to appreciate successful programmes. We sincerely hope not to fail their expectations in the years to come.



Museum of Ponišavlje, Pirot



Pavle Beljanski Memorial Collection Novi Sad



# Museum and the future of tradition

Marking the International Museum Day, ICOM Serbia held a round table discussion at the National Museum in Belgrade on the topic *Museums as Cultural Hubs: The Future of Tradition*, which will be in the focus of this year's ICOM Triennial in Kyoto

Text: Tamara Ognjević / Photos: Vuk Nenezić, VR Photo Team



From left to right: Marija Aleksić (Museum of African Art), Goran Vasić (National Museum Kruševac), Vesna Grgurović (Vrbas Town Museum), Nela Tonković (National Museum Šabac) and Tamara Ognjević (ICOM Serbia Vice President) as moderator

For three years in a row now, ICOM Serbia National Committee has organized a round table discussion marking the International Museum Day on 18<sup>th</sup> May. The topic has always been the one chosen by the International Community of Museums as the topical issue in the current year.

This year's topic was Museums as Cultural Hubs: The Future of Tradition, and the participants in the discussion about the new role of museums in the light of changed expectations of the audience and actual conditions in which the museums in Serbia operate included four directors of highly active, successful museums on the trail of new museology – Dr Marija Aleksić, director of the Museum of African Arts; Goran Vasić, director of the National Museum Kruševac; Vesna Grgurović, director of Vrbas Town Museum; and Nela Tonković, M.A., director of the National Museum Šabac.

The round table was held at the National Museum in Belgrade as a part of the *Museums for*

10 event, with ICOM Serbia becoming its official coordinator as of this year. Once again, the author and moderator of this quite interesting, dynamic discussion was ICOM Serbia Vice President and director of Artis Centre Tamara Ognjević, M.A. For the first time, the discussion was available to the public via live stream provided by VR Photo Team. In her introduction, Ognjević explained her choice of the round table participants. Namely, it is interesting to note that they are the directors of three museums outside major centers – Belgrade and Novi Sad, while the fourth heads a specific institution the collections of which have very little connection with the local cultural heritage. In practice, this means incomparably greater challenges concerning the changed role of the museum since it is primarily defined by the community in which it operates regardless of the world's mainstream.

It was really fascinating to learn about the experiences and opinions of the four people with

different attitudes regarding museum practice and tendencies in new museology, particularly in terms of the successful operation of the museums they manage. Still, they do have one thing in common – a remarkable ear for the setting they work in and being open for new ideas. At the same time, they are fully aware that the audience needs to be guided wisely and with a measure through certain processes and that a good assessment of the degree of feasibility and sustainability of some good, yet for small communities still premature concepts, is required. This resulted in the common conclusion that the museum should by all means lead the process of cultural changes, fully respecting local particularities and being fully aware of how much credibility the museum has as an institution spreading the proven knowledge and safekeeping cultural heritage. Therefore, the museum is not a place of revolution but of evolution which is to be encouraged wisely and with an undiminished awareness of the museum's primary role.

# A new life of the oldest museum in Serbia

Celebrating the 175<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the National Museum in Belgrade a year after it was reopened, let us take a glimpse of the new permanent exhibition in this umbrella organization for the protection of cultural heritage in Serbia

Text: Biljana Djordjević / Photos: National Museum in Belgrade

A year before the grand jubilee marking 175 years since its establishment, in June 2018 the National Museum was reopened for public in its full capacity. Although its Atrium hosted occasional exhibitions until 2016, the permanent exhibition was closed to the public as of June 2003 due to the lack of appropriate conditions for exhibitions.

The remedial works, adaptation and partial reconstruction of the building at the Republic Square provided proper conditions for the preservation and presentation of cultural heritage items entrusted to the National Museum for safekeeping. In compliance with

arranged in a timeline and conceived to bring closer to a wide audience the multicultural heritage of the Central Balkans and Europe in a visitor-friendly way, from prehistory to contemporary art. Its aim is to be both educational and appealing; not to fulfill all expectations of the audience on the very first tour, but to instill the need and habit in visitors to come back to the National Museum over and over again in order to have a tour only of one of its segments or see their favourite work of art.

The exhibition of prehistoric and ancient items, displayed along the rim of the Atrium, the most attractive part of the building on the

evidence of the oldest copper metallurgy in the Neolithic Age, formation of Paleo-Balkan tribes, contacts with ancient Greece and other centres of crafts and power of that period; the importance of Central Balkan provinces in the Roman empire until Late Antiquity, when the Central Balkan region became the seat of imperial power.

The original safes of the former Funds Administration, which later became Mortgage Bank, for which the building on the Republic Square was actually built, give a particularly authentic note to the numismatic collection. The two safes feature the exhibits which are most representative of the development of coinage from ancient to modern times.

The exhibition of medieval culture and art staged on the first floor features the period from the second half of the 6<sup>th</sup> century to the late 18<sup>th</sup> century. This huge time span – ranging from the settlement of the Slavs, to the establishment of the Serbian state and presentation of its territories in different periods and under different rulers, to the fall under the Ottoman rule – is shown through separate thematic units. They guide visitors through the growth of towns and everyday life in and around them; development of art; religious relics; imperial insignia; national cult of saints; and the evidence of European, Greek and Russian influences which led to the emergence of a new, authentic expression in the medieval Serbia.

*Miroslav's Gospel*, the only item of movable cultural heritage of extraordinary importance inscribed into UNESCO *Memory of the World Register*, is stored in a special room and in special conditions.

The second wing of the first floor is home to the Room of Prints. Right after the opening of the reconstructed building, this space featured Serbian prints from the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century. Several months later, this exhibition was replaced by Dutch prints. Due to the sensitivity of materials, this principle of periodic replacement of exhibited prints is to be followed in future.

The exhibition of Serbian paintings from the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century starts with the earliest examples of post-Byzantine and Baroque paintings from the 18<sup>th</sup> century. The artworks that follow belong to the styles of Biedermeier

contemporary museological standards, new systems have been installed, enabling a stable microclimate for over 450,000 exhibits. Total exhibition area has been expanded to over 5,000 m<sup>2</sup>, out of which the area of 315 m<sup>2</sup> is occupied by the Grand Gallery where theme exhibitions are staged.

The new permanent exhibition, opened on 28 June 2018 with a grand ceremony designated in the media as the event of the year, is

Republic Square, is conceived as a presentation of everyday life and beliefs of the population from the Central Balkans with exhibits with a timespan of almost half a million years – ranging from the fragments of the Heidelberg man's jaw found in Mala Balanica in Sićevo to the late 6<sup>th</sup> century AD. A special attention has been drawn to the occurrences and cultures clearly showing the beginning and development of civilization in this region – Lepenski Vir, Starčevo, Vinča; the







er naturalism and classicism, civilian portrait painting, religious Nazarene painting. There are also Romanticism paintings, while the largest group of works of art features the style of academic realism dating from the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century, dominated by history, genre and religious painting. Sculptures from the same art periods are also exhibited.

The second floor space is equally divided between the 20<sup>th</sup> century Serbian and Yugoslav art and the works from the Foreign Art Collection. The 20<sup>th</sup> century Serbian and Yugoslav art collection chronologically follows the development of modern painting in terms of the setting where it emerged, giving the audience a clear picture of the epoch in which the works were created.

The Foreign Art Collection covers the time span from the 14<sup>th</sup> to 20<sup>th</sup> century. The exhibition presents paintings and sculptures of some of the world's greatest artists, such as Tintoretto, Rubens and his school, Guardi, Canaletto, Pissarro, Degas, Monet, Renoir, Sisley, Gauguin, Toulouse-Lautrec, Matisse, Deren, Vlaminck and many others who never cease to amaze the audience.

The interaction with the audience is one of the museum's top priorities. The permanent setting and occasional exhibitions – there have been three of them over the past year: *All the Faces of Culture*, *The Painting and Life of Scholars in Ancient China*; *Bernini's School and the Roman Baroque*; and *Dura Jakšić - Between Myth and Reality* – have been accompanied by various programmes for audiences of all ages. They included guided tours by experts and authors, workshops for children and adults, and lectures given by distinguished professionals in relevant fields.

The reopening of permanent exhibition called for the launch of a redesigned web site of the National Museum, which was subsequently chosen by the PC PRESS magazine as the

### Record number of visitors!

Over the past year, the reopened permanent exhibition has had more than 250,000 visitors from home and abroad. The fact that many of them keep coming back to the National Museum is the best indicator of the successful work of this institution which managed to secure a fully deserved leading position in the protection of cultural heritage in Serbia, often facing seemingly insurmountable obstacles on its 175-year long journey.

best solution in the "Education and Culture" category in 2108.

All this time the National Museum has kept international contacts. In addition to hosting the above guest exhibitions, it has coordinated and participated in large-scale international projects, such as: the exhibition *Treasures and Emperors. The Splendor of Roman Serbia* in Palazzo Meizlik in Aquileia (10 March

to 3 June 2018), organized in cooperation with Fondazione Aquileia, Italy; and the project *100 Years of Trebenishte*, a collaboration between North Macedonia's Archaeological Museum in Skoplje and Bulgaria's National Archaeological Museum in Sofia, dedicated to a century's worth of excavations at the Trebenishte necropolis in North Macedonia carried out by the experts from all three countries. The resulting exhibition will be displayed in Belgrade in 2020. The exclusive monograph titled *100 Years of Trebenishte*, received the Publication-of-the-Year award at the ceremonial session of the NC ICOM Serbia Assembly and the National Museum was presented with the prestigious Institution-of-the-Year award for the entire scope of its international activities in 2018 on the same occasion.

The Ministry of Culture and Information presented the National Museum in Belgrade with a certificate of appreciation for its outstanding contribution to the marking of the European Year of Cultural Heritage 2018 and the *Cultural Pattern* award for its dedicated work to the benefit of our culture. The National Museum was also awarded the Sretenje Order of the First Degree for its overall performance.



# The largest Serbian museum abroad

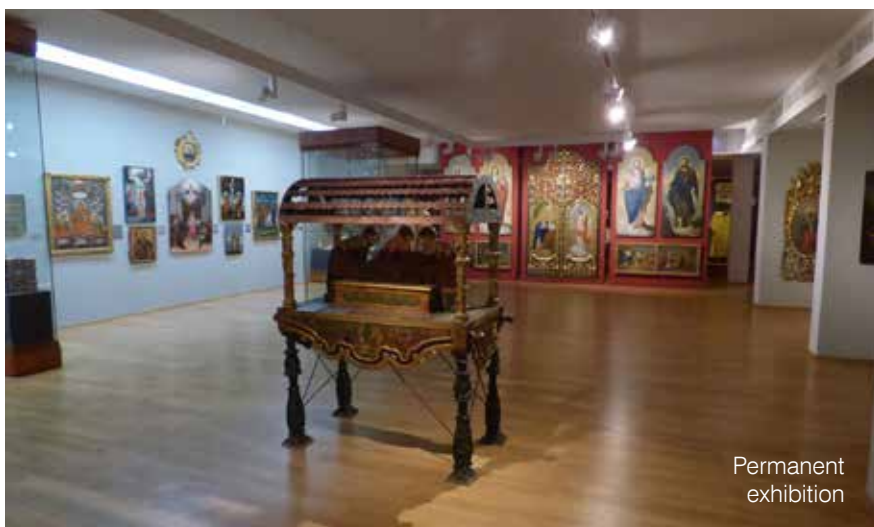
On Saturday, 25<sup>th</sup> May, in the presence of high Serbian and Hungarian church and political officials, a new permanent exhibition of the Serbian Church Museum in Szentendre was opened. In the adapted building of the former Serbian teacher training school, *Preparandija*, the ecclesiastical and art collection of the Eparchy of Buda got a new, more attractive and more modern exhibition space. Close to 400 items – icons, paintings, liturgical items and vestments – are displayed on two levels in about 500 square meters of the exhibition space.

Text: Tijana Palkovljević Bugarski / Photos: The Gallery of Matica Srpska

On the ground floor of the building, there is a modern reception area – with a detached museum cafe – from where one enters the space hosting the exhibition entitled *From the Past of the Serbs in Hungary*. Two of its sections – portraits of secular and spiritual dignitaries – tell the story of the life, political and social history of the Serbian people in Hungary. Along with the portraits of Sava Tekelija, Dositej Obradović and the works by Katarina Ivanović, as the leaders of educational and cultural life of Serbs in Hungary, the exhibits also include portraits of significant benefactors such as Naum and Jelena Bozda, and also of Evgen Dumča, the first Serb to serve as mayor of Szentendre.

In the next room, there are portraits of eparchs from the Eparchy of Buda, painted over a span of two centuries. The works of prominent Serbian painters such as Hristofor Žefarović, Jovan Popović or Arsenije Teodorović, feature the most distinguished figures that marked the history of the Eparchy of Buda – for instance, Stefan Stratimirović and Platon Atanacković, as the leaders of religious and spiritual life.

The exhibition *Serbian Ecclesiastical Art in Hungary* begins on the first floor; it shows the trends and development of the Serbian art in Hungary chronologically and by combining the works of fine and applied arts. Different stylistic and artistic approaches used from the 15<sup>th</sup> to the late 19<sup>th</sup> century are displayed. As the



Permanent exhibition

crown of the development of Serbian ecclesiastical art in Hungary, the central wall in the big hall showcases the icons from the central zone of the former iconostasis made by Arsenije Teodorović, a witness to the monumentality of the former Serbian cathedral church in Buda.

A museum organized like this is the most complete and the most modern church museum of the Serbian Orthodox Church, and a model of choice for presenting the art of Serbian cultural space in other European countries.

Nevertheless, the story about the setting up of this museum exhibition begins much earlier and deserves attention because it indicates a continuous process of planning and meaningful action. The building of the former *Preparandija*, in which the Ferenczy Museum had been located for decades, was returned to the Eparchy of Buda in a restitution process, but the structure did not meet the contemporary museum standards. Therefore, as early as 2008, the work on the adaptation of the building for the needs of the Museum of Eparchy began along with the preparation of the exhibits to be displayed. In cooperation with the Gallery of Matica Srpska on two multi-year projects, the planned conservation and restoration of items were undertaken so the proper condi-

tions for their exhibition could be provided. The period 2009–2012 saw the implementation of the project *Serbian Ecclesiastical Art in Hungary*, involving the conservation and restoration of forty exhibits. Subsequently, the exhibition with the same title was staged in Novi Sad, Szentendre, Brussels and Moscow. Based on that good example, the works on the next, even larger and more complex project began: conservation and restoration of icons from the iconostasis by Arsenije Teodorović, from the Serbian Orthodox Cathedral in Buda, torn down after being damaged during the bombing of Budapest in 1945. This project first included making records of the locations and conditions of all 73 salvaged icons, which was followed by complex restoration and conservation processes. Finally, the restored icons were presented at the exhibitions in Novi Sad and Budapest. At the exhibition *Arsenije Teodorović and the Serbian Church in Buda*, held in Novi Sad, the iconostasis was displayed for the first time as a whole artifact with all its preserved parts, and a story was told about this exceptional and yet tragically destroyed church, the grandeur of which is witnessed only by the monumental icons and the exquisite paintings of the great Serbian 19<sup>th</sup> century master Arsenije Teodorović. On



Opening of the new museum





### State and Church Patronage

the other hand, at the exhibition *The Serbian Orthodox Cathedral of Buda – Remembrances of the Bygone Tabán Suburb*, held in the Budapest History Museum, the parts of iconostasis served only as a pivot around which a story was told – with numerous other items and documents – about the former church, and also about the life and the significance of the Serbs in Buda in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries.

Owing to these two major projects, the list of items from the old exhibition of the Eparchy Museum, displayed in a too small and inadequate space of the building next to the Eparchial Palace in Szentendre, was amended and updated. The latest contribution was the work on four icons created by Mihajlo Živković, which were restored at the Gallery of Matica Srpska during 2018 and 2019.

During the final stage of the long-lasting restoration works, exhibits were moved and the new exhibition was organized. Based on the original concept of Kosta Vuković, the curator and manager of the museum, the conservation team of the Gallery of Matica Srpska examined and prepared the exhibits for transportation and setting up in the new museum. Through several group actions, the curators and conservators of the Gallery, supported by a team of Hungarian experts,

This project was made possible by the Government of the Republic of Hungary and the Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Serbia, with the blessing of His Holiness Patriarch Irinej, who officially opened the museum at a ceremony marking the 800th anniversary of the Independent Serbian Church. The Serbian Church Museum in Szentendre is a fine example of a well-managed building reconstruction, compliance of museological standards, top scientific approach and minimalist visual design – all of them blended into a harmonious whole which can definitely be a source of pride to the author Kosta Vuković, the Eparchy of Buda and the museum community.

finally set up the exhibition in May 2019.

Working together with the author of the exhibition, Svetlana Martinović created the visual identity with the intent to make the underlying idea clear and understandable to the public. Based on the new location of the museum in the very centre of Szentendre, a model of a diffused museum was created, which – in

addition to the tour of the museum exhibits – offers a visit to the renewed Serbian churches in Szentendre: Belgrade (Cathedral) Church, Transfiguration Church, Annunciation Church and Požarevac Church.

The opening of the Serbian Church Museum in Szentendre has completed the picture of our national art in the Serbian cultural space. The up-to-date museum standards aimed at improving security and safety of the exhibits, combined with a contemporary approach of exhibiting museum items in exceptionally functional and aesthetically appealing showcases, have given the exhibits a modern museological and scientific treatment through a well-thought-out narrative. With this exhibition which features captions in Serbian, Hungarian and English, the picture of development, accomplishments and particularities of the Serbian art and the life of Serbian people in Hungary has gained a new quality and become more accessible both to our and to the European audience. Now, this museum is not only a place that preserves Serbian fine artwork, but it has also grown into a venue of meetings and dialogues with the Hungarian and European cultures. Relying on these foundations, a series of activities and programmes are planned in the future for different audiences and professionals.

# Award for strengthening Serbian-French cultural relations

Tijana Palkovljević Bugarski, PhD, director of the Gallery of Matica Srpska, has received the French Order of Arts and Letters, Knight Grade, which is awarded for a special contribution to the promotion both of French and world's cultural heritage. This high recognition received by a Serbian museum expert was the reason for an interview with Dr Palkovljević Bugarski, who is rightfully considered by local experts and a wider cultural audience to be a leader in the regional museum community

Text: Editors of the ICOM Serbia magazine / Photos: Gallery of Matica Srpska



Tijana Palkovljević Bugarski, PhD, director of the Gallery of Matica Srpska, at gala ceremony at Embassy of the Republic of France in Belgrade

**T**onight we are showing honour to the fine arts and language, the synonyms for passing on culture and tradition, and to the passion of two people to whom it is my pleasure to bestow, on behalf of the Minister of Culture, the Order of Arts and Letters, Knight Grade... This was the opening speech at the gala ceremony held at the Embassy of the French Republic in Belgrade, when His Excellency Frédéric Mondoloni, the Ambassador of France to Serbia, presented the Order of Arts and Letters, Knight Grade, to Tijana Palkovljević Bugarski, PhD, director of the Gallery of Matica Srpska, and to Miloš Konstantinović, literary translator. The French Ministry of Culture presents this significant recognition to those who showed great creativity in the field of art or literature, contributing thus to the French and world's artistic cultural heritage. The Order was established in 1957, and is bestowed in three ranks: Knight, Officer and Commander.

**To the pride of the entire museum profession in Serbia, this was the first time in our country that the Order was awarded to a museum advisor and a museum director. In this way, attention was focused on the importance of museums' activities in the creation and development of cultural diplomacy. In an interview with the director of the Gallery of Matica Srpska, Tijana Palkovljević Bugarski, we asked her how she saw the Gallery's role of a "cultural diplomat".**

I truly believe in the power of "soft" or "cultural diplomacy" because I think that culture is the strongest cohesive element of the European continent. It brings us together, makes us the same, and yet different in our national peculiarities. Culture and art enable us to know, understand and therefore respect each other better. That is why we direct a significant part of our activities at the Gallery towards international coopera-





Frédéric Mondoloni,  
Ambassador of the  
Republic of France  
to Serbia, with Miloš  
Konstantinović  
(left) and Tijana  
Palkovljević  
Bugarski

tion through which we are trying to bring Serbian cultural heritage closer to European audience, but also to present the European works of art to our audience.

**In the previous decade, the Gallery established significant collaboration with many foreign cultural centres and institutes based in Serbia. One of them is the French Institute in Serbia. What is this collaboration based on and how has it been implemented over the years?**

The collaboration is based primarily on celebrating the Francophone Month, which has been held in our Gallery for the whole decade. This event includes various programmes promoting the relations and influences between Serbian and French art through exhibitions, lectures, promotions and educational programmes for children and young people. Over the previous years, we have realized a number of visiting and joint exhibitions in cooperation with the French Institute, such as *From the Bosphorus to the Adriatic. French Photographers Discover the Balkan Monuments of 1878–1914* and *One French Episode of Sava Šumanović*.

**The ties between French and Serbian culture were very strong in the past. How should we continue to develop these relations today? The Gallery of Matica Srpska can already proudly boast the organization of two exhibitions at the Serbian Cultural Center in Paris.**

Those ties were strong, but they are still very much existing. The Paris art scene strongly influenced the development of Serbian painting between the wars, and numerous Serbian painters still go to Paris, live there and actively participate in the current fine art scene. Last year, as a museum institution we staged two exhibitions at the Paris Cultural Center: *Images of the Passing World. Relations between French and Serbian Intimism* and *Sava Šumanović and the Secret under the Dome*, as we considered these themes attractive for the French audience, the themes which best promote the peculiarities and values of the Serbian fine art.

**We suppose that this award can contribute to establishing new partnerships with museums in France. As a recipient of the award, are you considering and planning cooperation with French museums?**

The honour I have been presented with by being chosen for this Order is also an obligation to think about how to deepen and make those connections more visible in the future. In the forthcoming period, we intend to continue the cooperation with the Louvre Museum and their Department for permanent education and educational programmes for children and young people, because I believe that the exchange of experience and experts provides for better functioning of museum institutions. Already towards the end of this year, our guest will be a colleague at the conference *Museums*

*and Young People*, who will present their programmes for this focus group. In September this year we will be hosting the National Photo Gallery *Jeu de Paume* with an exhibition about photographer Félix Nadar, and we intend to offer them the exhibition *Through the Lens*, which we held in 2018, to be displayed in their museum space. Finally, preparations are underway for putting this long-term idea of ours into action – to stage the exhibition *Zographs: Between Tradition and Modernity* in the National Museum of the Middle Ages, *Musée de Cluny*, in Paris.

**In the end, this award is certainly a huge professional success. What does the French order mean to you personally and how do you feel about the fact that you are now a part of the “club” whose members are prominent figures, such as film director Aleksandar Petrović, composer Philip Glass or singer Tina Turner?**

To me, this is an exceptional professional recognition which has shown that the commitment, quality and continuity of action are acknowledged and contribute to appreciation at a wider European level. It feels good to be in the company of great people and to be aware that you share with them the belief that culture is a powerful means for developing creativity, dialogue and mutual respect, and therefore for creating a better society for the future that lies ahead of us.

# Serbian Athens as the European capital of culture 2021

Novi Sad is the first city in Serbia that has been awarded the title of the European Capital of Culture in the largest cultural project of the European Union. It is a great honor, but also a big challenge for the multidisciplinary creative team working on the implementation of the currently largest international project in our country

Text: Lazar Jovanov, Sara Vuletić / Photos: NS ECC 2021

The European Capital of Culture is the largest EU project in the field of culture. This prestigious title has been awarded since 1985, and Novi Sad is expecting it in 2021. This project should primarily motivate and inspire those who work in culture, but also all citizens, to re-examine the present values and set new goals towards democratic cultural development of the city. Re-examining the contemporary identity of Novi Sad, revitalizing cultural heritage, reconstructing old and opening new spaces for cultural activities, development of international and cross-sector collaboration, encouraging intercultural dialogue, decentralizing culture and encouraging the participation of citizens in cultural events, are just some of the principles of cultural development leading to winning this prestigious title.

The motto of the “Novi Sad 2021 – European Capital of Culture” project is **“4 New Bridges”**, focused on **people, processes, places and programs** which will help accomplish its vision: **“The Beginning of New. Now!”**

The program narrative of the “Novi Sad 2021” Foundation also comes from the motto “4 New Bridges,” which represents the idea of building new bridges of collaboration and exchange between artists and organizations from Novi Sad and Serbia, and the European cultural scene. The implementation of the European Capital of Culture project and the values promoted



through its programs directly contribute to Serbia's European integration process. Also, the fact that Novi Sad is the first city awarded the European Capital of Culture title under a special program for candidate countries for EU membership, also speaks in support of the project's specific context affecting the concept of its programs. The “Novi Sad 2021” project is based on the idea of four program bridges, some of which have been symbolically named after the existing Novi Sad bridges – that is, in

line with the values that the city wishes to develop in the context of European integrations, reflecting the beliefs it nurtures and seeks to share with all Europeans. These bridges are Freedom, Rainbow, Hope and Love.

**The artistic concept** of the “Novi Sad 2021 – European Capital of Culture” project is based on the fundamental values of the EU, such as human rights, multiculturalism, intercultural dialogue, environmental awareness, peace policy. The program segments have been built by connecting these values with the history, culture and identity of Novi Sad, into eight thematic units or programme platforms: *Welcome, Second Europe, Future of Europe, Heroines, Fortress of Peace, Migrations, Kaleidoscope and Danube Sea*. Each bridge features flagship projects chosen based on their artistic and creative concept, attractiveness and compliance with set goals and principles of the programme, taking the place of the most visible projects to be implemented in the year of the title.

## Museums in the Context of the European Capital of Culture

There are over 30 public cultural institutions in

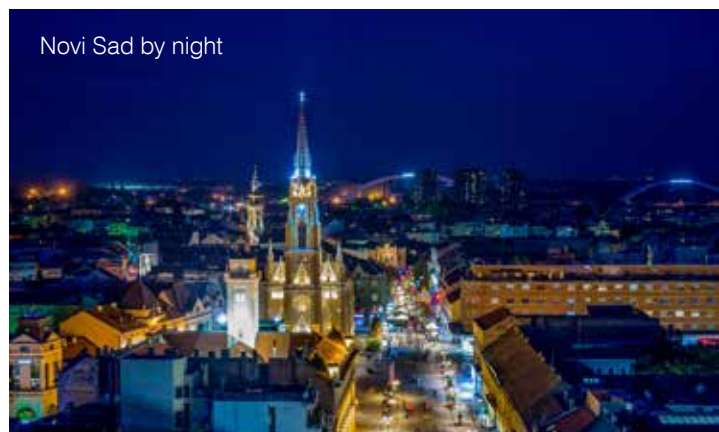
## Exhibitions and programmes in the year of the title – Novi Sad 2021

Given the complexity of the planned museum projects, creating program plans for 2021 is well under way. The focus is on progressive, aesthetically and technologically advanced museum exhibitions which will additionally improve the position of museums and enhance their visibility. In this way, even more attention is drawn to their existing rich potential which is considered a cultural treasure not only of Novi Sad, but of Serbia as well. In cooperation with the Gallery of Matica Srpska, plans have been started for a large international exhibition about European migrations, and a multimedia exhibition about Mileva Marić Einstein will be organized in collaboration with the City Museum of Novi Sad. Tapestry gallery and workshop “Atelier 61” is preparing a unique exhibition of tapestries with comic-book motifs, and a retrospective exhibition of the existing legacy pieces, seen from the feminist point of view.





Korzo- Kaleidoscope of culture



Novi Sad by night

the city of Novi Sad, with museums and galleries holding a special place owing to their rich and artistically relevant values. This museum potential represents exactly the resource for achieving the vision of the European Capital of Culture 2021, and serves as an excellent basis for creating a high-quality artistic program that follows contemporary aesthetic and cultural European and world trends. The prominent project leaders include: Gallery of Matica Srpska, Pavle Beljanski Memorial Collection, Museum of Vojvodina, Museum of Contemporary Art Vojvodina, Gallery of Fine Arts – Gift Collection of Rajko Mamuzić, tapestry gallery and workshop “Atelier 61” and City Museum of Novi Sad.

### Audience in Focus

In order to prepare the cultural scene for 2021 and enhance its capacity, various long-term processes, projects, initiatives and legislative changes have been initiated. In addition to the extensive work in progress on new cultural spaces, the strengthening of international cooperation and internationalization of the scene,

special emphasis has been placed on audience development and engagement. To this end, a program called “Audience in Focus” has been launched in cooperation with cultural institutions to introduce new discourse and approaches to audience engagement – the program that has been successfully implemented for the second year. After organized workshops and educational sessions, almost all museums applied for the 2018 public tender.

Some of the projects have particularly attracted public attention with innovative methods of engaging the audience. The Gallery of Matica Srpska, as a representative Serbian institution of culture, has engaged young people with an exciting exhibition entitled “The Young Choose,” under the “Little School of Museology” project. After a period of training, the young people took on the role of curators and created a respectable exhibition all by themselves. Their exhibition earned a special place in the official OPENS program, since Novi Sad was also nominated for the European Youth Capital 2019. Another interesting project of the Gallery of Matica Srpska is “Growing up with

Art” intended for babies and mothers, which required adapting the gallery space and creating unique music programs for the youngest, and where the young residents of Novi Sad and the Gallery created a cultural guide through Novi Sad. A model sustainable project was also developed by the Museum of Vojvodina in partnership with Room Escape Novi Sad, through a special game entitled “Museum Escape: The Secret of Immortality” featuring an animation of the museum’s existing legacy. Within the “Art and Inclusion” project, we also need to mention the public event organized by the Gallery of Matica Srpska and Per.Art association – a dance performance engaging people with disabilities.

What makes the “Audience in Focus” so distinctive is the fact that cultural institutions have united for the first time and started joint preparations for the program in line with the unique program and cultural policies of the city. In this way, the museums of Novi Sad will put their existing resources into service of the “4 New Bridges” concept, introducing themselves to both national and international audiences.

### Capacity Improvement and Educational Programs

The development of long-term strategic plans for all cultural institutions in Novi Sad is under way. An association of professionals from all cultural institutions has been established. They have gathered for the first time around a single activity in order to make strategic plans in a coordinated manner, which includes participation in the programs for 2021. The entire process is guided by the international UNESCO Chair in Cultural Policy and Cultural Management of the University of Arts in Belgrade. More than thirty experts from the country and abroad are available mainly for strategic planning training sessions, but also for subsequent mentoring. As an outcome, for the first time this autumn, all cultural institutions of one city in Serbia will have completed their strategic plans for the next five to seven years.



PUF Exhibition

# Something new, something old, something borrowed and something golden...

This March, after complex works that lasted for several years, a new permanent exhibition of the National Museum Kruševac was opened

Text and photos: Zorana Drašković

The National Museum Kruševac was founded on 19<sup>th</sup> December 1951. It has been carrying out its primary activity of collecting, preserving, safeguarding and displaying movable cultural goods and the remnants of the homeland's material culture. With time, it has become an important cultural institution, building up a respectable position in the network of Serbian museums. Located in the area of the archaeological park, near the Lazarica Church, which is the Prince Lazar's endowment, the National Museum Kruševac is an unavoidable destination when it comes to the cultural and tourist offer of the city.

During the first two decades of its existence, the museum overgrew the space of the House of Simić where it was originally located. The building became too small for the museum's emerging needs, so in 1969 the Museum moved to the building of the former Gymnasium within the complex of the Kruševac City. In this neoclassical building built in 1863, with its Art Nouveau style ornaments from 1908, a permanent museum exhibition which testifies to the historical and cultural development and transformation of Kruševac and its surroundings is on display today.

The museum fund contains about 23,000 exhibits of natural, archaeological, ethnological, historical, cultural-historical and artistic nature, from a period covering over six mil-



Ivan Meštrović, Model of the Vidovdan Temple, 1912.

lennia: from prehistory, through antiquity and medieval times, through the period of Turkish dominance and restoration of Serbian statehood, to the middle of the 20th century. In ad-

dition to the exhibition, the museum pays a lot of attention to research, publishing, cultural, educational and teaching activities, as well as to the affirmation of authentic values of the homeland. Rich cultural legacy is presented through exhibitions, catalogues, specialized publications and media.

In addition to the central building in the medieval City of Kruševac, the House of Simić, the Art Gallery and the Slobodište Memorial Complex are also parts of the National Museum Kruševac.

The reason for publishing a text about the National Museum Kruševac in the new issue of the ICOM magazine was the opening of a new permanent exhibition on 21<sup>st</sup> March 2019. The first day of spring symbolically marked a new period in the decades-long duration of the museum. The last permanent exhibition dates back to 1971, and was prepared in honour of the 600<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the city. That exhibition was not substantially modified until 2011, when the extensive reconstruction of the museum building began. During 2012, the exhibits and the inventory – displaced while the construction works were in progress – were returned to the building. A team of experts from the National Museum started creating the new permanent exhibition in the early 2013. The whole process – from making a synopsis to final realization – lasted



Opening of new permanent exhibition in National Museum Kruševac



## The pearls of the permanent exhibition

- "Celtic" gold earrings from 5<sup>th</sup> century BC, "imported" to our region.
- The replica of Prince Lazar's dress, the original of which is kept in the Museum of the Serbian Orthodox Church.
- Model of the Vidovdan Temple designed by Ivan Meštrović, and first presented by the artist himself in Belgrade in 1912, at the dawn of the Balkan Wars.
- Legate of Stanislav Binički (1872-1942), which - besides personal items, documents and photographs - contains original notes of the composition March to the Drina.

almost six years, and the pace of work was dictated by the inflow of funds. During the works the museum was never closed, and it had around 20,000 visitors annually. In the meantime, two temporary exhibitions were on display, maintaining constant touch with the museum audience. In the same period, stained glass windows were installed in the entrance hall, financed by the Ministry of Culture and Information, and a souvenir shop was renovated with the support of the Serbian Ministry of Trade and Tourism.

Speaking in numbers, the new permanent exhibition consists of over two thousand items presented chronologically from prehistory to the 1970s, with a focus on the history of the town and region of which Kruševac is the center. It spans 850 square meters, over two levels. The Ministry of Culture and Information financed the project with 12 million dinars, and the City of Kruševac with 2 million dinars. The reconstruction of the building and setting up of the exhibition lasted eight years – with breaks dependent on the inflow of funds – the Museum being open to visitors all the time. Only the experts of our museum, led by historian Goran Vasić, museum's director, took part in designing and implementing this project.

The opening ceremony gathered together guests from 16 Serbian museums, including the National Museum of Serbia (Belgrade), the representatives of the Ministry of Culture and Information of the Republic of Serbia, heads of institutions and businesses, and Kruševac city officials. A rich cultural and artistic program contributed to the friendly atmosphere of the meeting of colleagues from all over Serbia.



The replica of Prince Lazar's dress

# May you live in interesting times

The ongoing Venice Art Biennale includes artworks that reflect upon precarious aspects of existence today, including different threats to key traditions, institutions and relationships of the "post-war order"

Text: Jovana Pikulić / Photos: Dušan Todorović, Vuk Ćuk, Jovana Pikulić



Felicia Abban  
portraits of  
Ghanaian women

The theme of the 58<sup>th</sup> Venice Art Biennale – *May You Live in Interesting Times* – chosen by Ralph Rugoff, the curator of this event, was inspired by an ancient Chinese curse that British politician Joseph Austen Chamberlain invoked in a speech given in 1936. Rugoff set the theme as an artistic response to precarious aspects of existence today, including threats to traditions, institutions and relationships of the "post-war order." Biennale President Paolo Baratta additionally explained the theme as a sort of curse where the expression "interesting times" evokes the idea of challenging or even "menacing" times.

The aim of the central exhibition is to explore how art functions in the time of fake news. Talking about the choice of artists involved in the central exhibition, Rugoff explained that it focused on those who challenged us to reassess the so called facts, suggesting other ways of connecting and contextualizing them. The Exhibition is divided into two separate displays hosted in the Arsenale and the Central Pavilion – Giardini. The participants are presented in both venues but with different works which often give the impression they were made by another author. The aim is emphasizing a multidimensional approach to art and the idea that our perception of artworks is shaped by the architectural setting they are presented in.

## Regaining Memory Loss

The 58<sup>th</sup> Biennale includes the works of 79 individual participants from all over the world, as well as 89 national participants. For the first time this year, the audience has been able to visit national art pavilions of Ghana, Madagascar, Malaysia, Pakistan and Dominican Republic.

This year, the Republic of Serbia is represented with the exhibition *Regaining Memory Loss* by Djordje Ozbolt, a Serbian artist living and working in London. The commissioner is Vladislav Šćepanović, professor at the Faculty of Applied Arts in Belgrade, while the Heritage House, Belgrade is in charge of the project implementation. The curator is Nicoletta Lambertucci of the Box

## Ghana's Great Success

One of the biggest surprises of this year's Biennale is *Ghana Freedom* pavilion which presents the works of several artists. It was designed by architect David Adjaye. Its curator is Nana Oforiatta Ayim. The pavilion displays large installations by El Anatsui and Ibrahim Mahama, a video installation by John Akomfrah, a video sculpture by Selasi Awusi Sosu, nine paintings by Lynette Yiadom-Boakye and photographs by Felicia Abban, the first female professional photographer in Ghana. Apart from the exceptional works, the exhibition space has been cleverly designed. Monumental installations lead the audience into the space where the intimate works of Yiadom-Boakye and Abban are displayed. The characteristic and very strong artistic expression of Lynette Yiadom-Boakye makes her oils on canvas truly amazing. The photographs by Felicia Abban – her self-portraits and portraits of Ghanaian women made in the 1960s and 1970s – leave an equally powerful impression.



Museum in Plymouth. The underlying idea of this multimedia exhibition, including a mural, paintings and sculptures, is the unreliable nature of memory. The title itself is a word play where irony is used to create a short circuit of meaning. The artworks are inspired by the motifs of socialist culture, an unavoidable aspect of school excursions in the socialist Yugoslavia where the artist himself grew up. The mural dominating the pavilion walls features a grey, moonlit landscape on top of which more paintings are hung – seven acrylic pieces on canvas with bright saturated colours. The paintings are the artist's personal interpretation of his past experiences – selective fragments of memory which, like windows of memories open onto the monochromatic landscape of the faded memory. Five monumental sculptures made of cut polystyrene lined with plexiglass are freely positioned in the space, completing the artist's concept with the paintings. The ironical tone of the exhibition perfectly matches the setting of the totalitarian building where the Yugoslav pavilion was located in 1938 – its monumental lintel is inscribed with the word "Yugoslavia".

### Golden Lion to The White Album

American artist Arthur Jafa won the Golden Lion in the category of individual participants for his film *The White Album*, presented at the Central Pavilion, Giardini. The title is an allusion to the Beatles' most iconic album. His work features a series of video segments that tackle thorny issues around race and violence. Silver Lion was awarded to Haris Epaminonda, while Teresa Margolles and Otobong Nkanga received special mentions of the jury. Ralf Rugoff picked several noteworthy artists, including Frida Orupabo, Jill Mulleady, Martine Gutierrez, Lawrence Abu Hamdan and Soham Gupta.

Golden Lion for best national participation



*Regaining Memory Loss*  
by Djordje Ozbolt in the  
Republic of Serbia Pavilion

was presented to Lithuania for the performance *Sun & Sea* (Marina). This project is the outcome of a joint effort by a theatre director **Rugile Barzdziukaite**, writer **Vai-va Grainyte** and musician **Lina Lapelyte**, who transformed the Lithuanian pavilion into a beach with vacationers of versatile profiles. They sing about their everyday concerns linked by a common theme of human laziness and neglect of the environment.

A special mention of the jury went to the Belgian pavilion for *Mondo Cane*, a comic installation involving a series of mannequins, by Jos de Gruyter and Harald Thys. The project was named after an Italian film from 1962 which inaugurated a genre displaying weird, shocking scenes with little continuity. The central part of the installation features a scene made up of several mannequins symbolizing productive members of society, while the peripheral space of the pavilion is occupied by cages with outcasts and the unwanted.



Japanese  
Cosmo-Eggs



Iranian Pavilion

### Japanese Cosmo-Eggs

Japanese pavilion introduces its installation Cosmo-Eggs created by four people with different interests and specialities: artist Motoyuki Shitamichi, composer Taro Yasuno, anthropologist Toshiaki Ishikura and architect Fuminori Nosaku. The title Cosmo-Eggs is derived from the various myths throughout the world concerning the birth of life from the Cosmic-Egg. The exhibition intelligently focuses on ecology and coexistence of humans and their environment. The artists, each in his own way, explore the forms of coexistence between humans and non-humans. The exhibition is curated by Hiroyuki Hattori, associate professor at Akita University of Art.

# Museum connections on the Silk Road

The increasingly intensive cultural cooperation between China and the countries of Central and Eastern Europe within the 16+1 Forum and "The Belt and Road" programme, and the initiative of ICOM China and the local Association of Museum Professionals are opening new perspectives for the museum professionals in Serbia as well

Text: Biljana Djordjević / Photos: Biljana Djordjević and Xu Yun





## The 2<sup>nd</sup> China-CEEC Expert-Level Forum on Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage – Creating Cultural Memories with Hands

The autumn of 2018 saw three major events in the international cooperation of museums that took place at the southeast of China. The first one was the conference on intangible cultural heritage, as one of the topics of the 16+1 Forum which is an abbreviated title of the Chinese initiative for establishing a closer cooperation with the countries of Central and Eastern Europe within The Belt and Road program, held on 17–22 September in Hangzhou, the capital of Zhejiang province. The focus of the second conference on intangible cultural heritage within the Forum was on traditional crafts, their connection with the cultural identity of the settings they originate from and their role in creating cultural memory of local communities. Besides China, the conference gathered thirteen countries of the Central and Eastern Europe: Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Hungary, North Macedonia, Poland, Slovenia, Slovakia, Croatia, Czech Republic and Serbia.

This was an opportunity to get to know something more about Polish woven double-sided carpets, similar to Pirot kilims, only styled with different ornaments and colours; Konjic woodcarving practiced in Bosnia and Herzegovina; making hope chests in North Macedonia; knitted gloves from Estonia, indigo dyeing process practiced in Hungary, which is also part of the Chinese cultural heritage; sewing folk costumes in Latvia and Lithuania; sustainable development of crafts in Slovenia; education systems in Croatia, Slovakia and Estonia; systems of recognition of living heritage and rewarding old, traditional craftsmen as the keepers of heritage in Hungary, Czech Republic and Poland. In turn, Chinese partners demonstrated traditional crafts from their own country, so additional activities around the conference mostly included the visits to craft centers and the tour of Hangzhou Grand Canal Museum. Inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage List, the Grand Canal serves as an important 1,800 km long waterway linking this town with Beijing for thousands of years now.

Recognized as an intangible cultural heritage, traditional Serbian crafts, with a particular emphasis on hand-wheel pottery in Zlakusa – Serbian candidate for the inscription onto UNESCO Representative list of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity in 2020 – were presented by Biljana Djordjević, the author of this text, in her paper *Preservation and the Sustainable Development of Hand-wheel*



Zlakusa pottery master Darko Klopanski and his exhibit

*Pottery Making in Zlakusa – a Desirable Path for Safeguarding of Traditional Craftsmanship in Serbia.*

One of the most positive results of the Conference is by all means the adoption of the proposal by RA ICOM SEE (Regional Al-

liance of ICOM for South East Europe) to launch the initiative for establishing the International Day of nontangible cultural heritage which would be celebrated on 17<sup>th</sup> October, the day when in 2003 the UNESCO Convention was adopted. In her closing ceremony speech, Guo Yi, director of Zhejiang Province Intangible Cultural Heritage Protection Centre and the newly-established Intangible Cultural Heritage Museum, praised this proposal as a good initiative which was included in the conclusions of the Conference.

This event was accompanied by the 16+1 Expo, organized within the 10<sup>th</sup> China International Aging Industry Expo 2018, featuring the exhibits from European participants, which were subsequently donated to the Zhejiang Province Intangible Cultural Heritage Museum that was soon to be established. Serbia was represented by Darko Klopanski, a master of hand-wheel pottery in Zlakusa,



Biljana Djordjević's presentation

## Bojana Borić Brešković, IAMS Vice President

During the MPT EXPO, the Fuzhou Strait International Conference & Exhibition Center (FSICEC) hosted the first Silk Road International Museum Alliance (IAMS) Conference. IAMS is a non-government, non-profit, open international system and a communication platform dealing with cultural heritage, founded on 18th May 2017, the International Museum Day. Its aims include cultural exchange and cooperation, inclusivity and equality among its members. The National Museum in Belgrade was invited to join the alliance and its director, Bojana Borić Brešković, was appointed IAMS Vice President on the occasion. This was a great privilege not only for the National Museum, but for the museum community in Serbia as a whole.



who displayed two of his pots intended to adorn the showcases of the future Hangzhou museum. In turn, he was awarded a certificate of appreciation at the Forum closing ceremony, together with all other donors.

### The 8th Chinese Museums and Relevant Products and Technologies Exposition – MPT EXPO 2018

MPT EXPO is the largest and one of the most influential international fairs of museums and museum-related industries in China. It was held in the city of Fuzhou, the capital of Fujian province, and gathered more than 600 exhibitors. Additionally, several conferences, forums and other relevant professional gatherings were organized. Two of these events were

attended by the representatives of Serbia.

### International Forum of Young Museum Professionals – Museums as Cutting-edge Spaces & ICOM-ITC Management Board Meeting

The International Forum of Young Museum Professionals, held on 23–26 November 2018, was jointly organized by ICOM, Chinese Museum Association and Fuzhou Municipal People's Government. The Forum was officially opened by Yuzhu Liu of the National Cultural Heritage Administration and Suay Aksoy, ICOM President.

The Forum was preceded by a two-week training session attended by a large number

of young museum experts from all continents who also participated in the Forum. The keynote speakers included Reena Dewan from India, Meixia Guo, Ye Song and Xiaofei Yang from China, Javier Jimenez from Spain, Maria Fernanda Martinez Fontaine from Chile and Jasper Buikx from the Netherlands. The Forum addressed several topics in three parallel sessions: *The Role of Museums in the Inheritance and Innovation of Local Traditional Culture*, *Information Communication Technologies and New Social Images of Museum* and *Young Museum Professionals and the Sustainable Development of Regional Culture*.

The participants were able to get a more detailed picture of China's progress in developing museum activities and preserving cultural heritage in general during a visit to the Fujian Museum in Fuzhou, its cultural sites and natural monuments, as well as to museums and traditional craft centers in the city of Putian and the temple of goddess Mazu on Meizhou island.

During the Forum, a bilateral agreement was officially signed between the national committees of ICOM China and ICOM Pakistan; there was also a promotion of the forthcoming 2019 ICOM General Conference in Kyoto and ICOM-ITC held the Management Board Meeting. Since RA ICOM SEE is one of its changing members, it was represented this time by Biljana Djordjević, secretary of RA ICOM SEE.





## Pioneering venture

Last year, conservator Ivan Pavić, M.A., from the National Museum in Belgrade, was given a complex task of passing to the students of the Academy of Fine Arts in Xi'an the knowledge related to conservation of artworks painted on canvas, a material that only arrived in China in recent times

Text and photos: Ivan Pavić



From 1<sup>st</sup> to 30<sup>th</sup> September 2018, at the recommendation of the Faculty of Fine Arts in Belgrade, I stayed in the People's Republic of China as a visiting professor at the Academy of Fine Arts in Xi'an. During this stay, I gave a lecture, and then held a workshop on conservation and restoration of canvas easel paintings. In view of the specific situation in the PRC, this was a kind of pioneering venture.

Namely, the conservation and preservation of materials on which and of which the works of art have traditionally been made (paper, silk, wood, metal, terracotta, porcelain, jade, stone) are well-known in China, while the history of oil painting on canvas is shorter than a century, so the conservation of paintings made on canvas is only emerging. Therefore, it was impossible to find all the appropriate equipment and material, so I faced smaller or bigger obstacles while ordering them (I had arranged the purchase in advance, mostly before coming to Xi'an). On canvas paintings by the contemporary Chinese authors, there are also some technological flaws – for instance, stretcher bars with a square cross section, no bevels and no openings provided for wedges.

Sixteen assistant professors and master students took part in the lectures I gave during the first two days, and in the practical work in the days that followed. The lectures familiarized the participants with the theoretical aspect of this field (including conservation studies and displaying reproductions of the paintings with the examples of various conservation and restoration in-

terventions), while the practical work consisted of interventions on eight paintings with slight or more serious damages of different kinds, which could be repaired by beginners and with a professor's assistance. In this case, the interventions included *strip lining*, sewing cuts and tears, ironing the protruding and recessed parts of the canvas stretcher, stretching the paintings onto wooden stretcher frames with nailing wedges, cleaning, applying a new layer of gesso to the areas where it was missing, watercolor retouching, varnishing, and – finally – retouching with desaturated oil paint. We needed to use oil paints because it was impossible to find art restoration paints in Xi'an.

On some of the paintings, it was possible to

suck-up dust from the back of the canvas, as well as to fix the raised parts of the primer and of the coloured layer. The latter procedure involved the use of Japanese paper and ironing. This was improvised because we could not obtain a paper similar to the so-called Japanese paper, nor the proper irons; nevertheless, the desired results were eventually achieved. The workshop participants were able to complete all the mentioned procedures and soon became quite skillful at them.

In the end, all of the participants showed more or less good results at their first encounter with conservation and restoration works on easel paintings, as well as the desire to improve and deepen their knowledge in this area.



Ivan Pavić (center) and his Chinese students

# Reassessing the role of museums in the contemporary world

The annual conference of the ICOM International Committee for Museums and Collections of Ethnography (ICME), held in the fall of 2018 at the Estonian National Museum in Tartu, primarily dealt with challenges of modern museology, among which migrations, decolonization and repatriation are extremely relevant nowadays

Text: Tatjana Bugarski / Photos: Aivo Põlluäär, Patoo Cusripituck and Tatjana Bugarski

This year's conference of the ICOM ICME (International Committee for Museums and Collections of Ethnography) was held from 9<sup>th</sup> through 12<sup>th</sup> October at the Estonian National Museum in Tartu, bringing together around 100 experts from more than 20 countries worldwide. The topic of this year's conference was *Re-imagining the Museum in the Global Contemporary*.

Welcoming participants in this truly beautiful and very well equipped new museum, Alar Karis, head of the Estonian National Museum, emphasized the importance of infrastructure, but also of passion and knowledge that made this museum so successful. The keynote speakers were renowned scholars who in academic and practical museological sense deal with reexamining the role of museums in contemporary society: Andrea Witcomb, PhD (Australia), Wayne Modest, PhD (Netherlands), Philipp Schorch, PhD (Germany) and Pille Runnel, PhD (Estonia). They presented their experiences and analyses of ethnographic museology in past and present, em-



phasizing the responsibility of ethnographic museology and the need for it to be viewed as a very delicate form of human interaction, including the relation with the world that surrounds us, and a constant need for reexamining one's own, not always desirable legacy. Confronting the colonial past was reassessed in the light of repatriation, and included the reflections on different levels of relations in the dialogue of cultures that emerged with the establishment of ethnographical museums of colonial type. The first stage or a prerequisite for decolonization of museums is the inclusion of the voices of communities whose heritage is presented at museum exhibitions. Andrea Witcomb, whose very influential book *Re-Imagining the Museum: Beyond the Mausoleum* served as the inspiration for the topic of this conference, conveyed her thoughts about ethnological and anthropological approach which could contribute to contemporary museology that is dealing with relations among different cultures, and which primarily means shifting attitudes from being tolerant to being empathic.

tifacts, histories and biographies of collections, engagement of audience, challenges of decolonization, examples of repatriation, contemporary economic and environmental crisis, cooperation and partnerships among museums, migrations, role of digital media, naïve art, and problematizing power and authority.

My participation at the conference involved a lecture and a poster presentation entitled *Curating Rituals: Challenges and Experiences in Time Perspective*, focusing on museological treatment of rituals and ritual – traditional – objects in different social and political contexts, while taking into account the specifics of ritualized behavior as a human activity.

The Estonian National Museum (Eesti Rahva Muuseum) has received a number of awards and honours in the last two years, since the new building with the new permanent exhibition was opened. One of the most important is the Kenneth Hudson Award of the European Museum Forum, which this museum won in 2018 in recognition of “the most unusual and daring achievement that challenges common perceptions of the role of museums in society, continuing the work in the spirit of Kenneth Hudson”. The jury noted that, “This museum provides a thoughtful exploration of what belonging to a place means, so that it collects, preserves and interprets memories of the past in ways which make the museum an inclusive, creative learning environment for all. This museum considers and deals with complex and controversial histories and views its main responsibility as collecting and preserving memory to create a new vision of cultural dialogue which links past with future. By taking a dialogic multi-vocal, participatory approach to the history of everyday life, the museum reinvents the traditional concept of a national museum.”

The Estonian National Museum is mostly an ethnographic museum that cherishes and preserves ethnographic and folklore heritage of Estonians and other Finno-Ugric peoples.



Permanent exhibition Encounters at the Estonian National Museum in Tartu

Presentations of other participants dealt with reassessing museum practices, museum ar-





Conference participants

In the new building, two permanent exhibitions are on display: *Encounters*, presenting the everyday life in Estonia from the earliest archeological findings to the modern period, and *Echo of the Urals*, dedicated to Finno-Ugric peoples and their culture. The exhibitions feature numerous digitized contents, interactive and multisensory effects, carefully incorporated in the setting by the authors so as not to draw attention from museum artifacts and mainstream stories, but at the same time present a contemporary image of Estonia as one of the leading countries in the IT sector (Estonia is the birthplace of Skype, and also of the E-government platforms). Besides the depot and the conservatory departments, which are set up in accordance with state-of-the-art concepts and equipped with numerous technological amenities, the building also offers large spaces for thematic exhibitions, an open section of the depot, a museum restaurant, a lounge with a stage and a sound system, a movie theatre / conference hall, a library, a coffee shop, a souvenir shop and a center for heritage studies – department in charge of the work with clients and researchers.

In addition to a four-day work in an inspiring environment of the Estonian National Museum, the organizers also arranged familiarizing with cultures of the minority groups in regions Setomaa and Peipsi, as well as a one-day visit to

museums in Tallinn, the Estonian capital (Historical Museum, Maritime Museum, KUMU).

With the ICOM National Committee of Finland as the host, the participants of the conference enjoyed a two-day tour of the most important institutions in Helsinki, dedicated to preserving the cultural heritage of this country (The National Museum of Finland,

Helsinki City Museum, National Archives of Finland and The National Library). Among other things, we had a special privilege to try out one particular segment of the Finnish traditional culture – a smoke sauna. Exceptionally inspirational was the visit to the new central depot building in a Helsinki suburb, with excellent conditions for conservation and preservation of museum exhibits and items.



Several exhibitors presented their view of museum decolonization

# Collective memory, art and identity

At the annual conference IC-MEMO, held in Israel last October, this international committee that brings together memorial museums dedicated to the victims of public crimes, reassessed the sensitive relation between memories, art and identity

Text and photos: Katarina Babić

Last October, the regular annual conference of the international committee IC-MEMO was held in Tel Aviv and Jerusalem. Katarina Babić, senior curator of the Memorial Park “October in Kragujevac,” was invited to take part in this important museological gathering and present a paper entitled *The Memorial Museum October 21: Collective Memory, Art and Identity* under the *Memory, Art and Identity* programme.

Modern architecture in former Yugoslavia, seen in a wider context of developing a value system and the national identity model, had a function of creating an image of a progressive and modern society, rapid urbanization, industrialization, and technological progress. Modern architecture became an integral part of Yugoslav identity. Its importance has been recognized and acknowledged as a part of the world's history of modernism by international experts in this field.

One of the most representative examples of such practice is the building of the Memorial Museum “October 21”. The Museum building is a masterpiece of modern architecture, designed by Ivan Antić and Ivanka Raspopović. The design follows the spirit of Serbo-Byzantine style; its plan is a cross-in-square type – a universal symbol of suffering. Modeled after the Serbian medieval church



of the Gračanica Monastery, the composition of 33 turrets is arranged in a pyramidal pattern and is reminiscent of 33 mass graves. The turrets – also known as “celestial wells”

– have no windows, so the light comes only from the domes situated at the top of the turrets, suggesting the last glance the victims cast at the sky in expectation of salvation or deliverance. The building is made of red bricks which symbolize the shedding of blood. The dramatics and hopelessness of the situation in which the hostages found themselves just before the execution, are being transferred to a visitor in a suggestive way by the architectural elements used. A personal tragedy turned into a universal one.

Collective memory and cultural heritage are materialized in an exceptionally powerful architectural form which encourages us to reflect upon existential issues, the absurdity of war and value of preserving peace. Being an integral part of individual and collective identity, the culture of remembrance has demonstrated its formal and normative aspect by translating factual knowledge into an original context in the form of a unique architectural building of the Memorial Museum “October 21”.



Katarina Babić's presentation



# When old Paraćin comes to life

Thanks to a successful collaboration with the Mathematical Institute SASA, the Institute for Creative Entrepreneurship and Innovation and the local community, the economic heritage of Paraćin and the long-gone town architecture have now been made available again to the local residents through state-of-the-art technology

Text: Branislav Stojanović / Photos: Hometown Museum Paraćin

**T**he *Economic Development of Paraćin and the Beginnings of Industrialization* project was launched in 2018 with the aim to valorize, interpret and make available to the municipality public the missing or devastated economic and architectural heritage. The project is an integral part of the comprehensive reconstruction works on the museum and introduction of new technologies into the museum programmes. The fruits of this undertaking are the exhibition *Paraćin Economy: from a Mill to Modern Industry* – authored by Hristina Mikić, PhD, and Estela Radonjić-Živkov, a multimedia catalogue and the reconstructed town architecture on fourteen locations in the municipality centre.

The multimedia exhibition and catalogue are dedicated to the economic development of Paraćin from the pre-war period to the present days through a story of its most important factories and banks established before the war. By blending former and current appearance (seen from the same perspective) of buildings, augmented reality gives the visitors of Paraćin a unique glimpse of



the history of architectural heritage from the pre-war period on eleven locations.

*Paracin* application, available at Google Play, features multimedia content which includes the most interesting digital archive material about economy, multimedia presentations of factories through several periods, archive video footage about the operation of factories, old product catalogues, photos of owners and their philanthropic ventures in the municipality. Along with digitalization, the project devoted its special attention to the local community members with whom the authors collabo-

rated in order to collect new material, thus generating community's greater interest in the exhibition itself and contributing to a higher-quality interpretation of Paraćin's economic history. Each one of the project components is loaded with innovation – from the variety of multimedia and interactive features displayed on panels, in books and *in situ*, to photos of factory and bank owners, introduced to the audience for the first time, and personal documents kept by their descendants as well as by the families of factory employees, to the fact that the museum has stepped out of its building for the first time and offered an outdoor exhibition in the town centre. The project evaluation showed that, owing to its activities, the museum even reached the segment of the audience not overly keen on museum programmes and that the project's interactive and comprehensive nature was the key quality that boosted the attendance, particularly among the younger population who promoted it through social media. We are glad that Paraćin's economy is a frequent topic of conversation today and that it has digitally refreshed the memory of the local

residents. Our museum is especially proud that this project has brought about some social changes as well, particularly those related to the habits of young people since it has encouraged them to get more interested in museum activities and visit exhibitions more often.



# Short (hi)story of evaluating success and failure

Initially conceived as a course entitled *The Nine Deaths of a Curator*, an authentic, educational seminar held by Nikola Krstović, PhD, by turn of events resurrected and became *The Nine Lives of a Curator* – despite the circumstances and to the delight of future museologists

Text: Nikola Krstović / Photos: Center for Museology and Heritology, Faculty of Philosophy in Belgrade

In 2016, a pilot version of the course *The Nine Deaths of a Curator* was taught at the Faculty of Philosophy in Belgrade as part of the Critical Museology and Heritology course. In the same year, at the “Old Village” Museum in Sirogojno, a summer school of museology was held with Dominique Poulot, the professor of museology at Sorbonne University, as the main guest. The idea was to merge these two activities into one and make them a part of the museum programme. However, the catastrophically bad management of the museum from the beginning of 2017 stifled the idea altogether. Fortunately, since 2018, the course has again become a part of the academic environment and of the Seminar of Museology and Heritology, Art History Department, under a slightly less dramatic, unofficial name *The Nine Lives of a Curator*.

## Starting Points for Experiencing and Understanding Heritage. The Underlying Idea

Curator or custodian is not only a museum profession, nor the divisions in safeguarding and creating the cultural environment and collective memories are so defined. It is a profession of the future that deals with blending – to refer to Zbynek Stranski and his view of museology – of different realities with regard to geography, chronology, ideas and values. Even Google confessed that the STEM skills were ever less appreciated, and that there was a growing need for the humanities. According to a Japanese study, the profession of the late 21<sup>st</sup> century will be – a poet. The great museographer from the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century was convinced that a museum was a work of an artist, a dreamer and a poet. So here we are – we have completed a full cycle over a span of 200 years.

The notion of circulation and flow of ideas is also key to the course structure: 9 “lectures”, 3 mentored workshops, students’ group projects in virtual space, and public “defenses” in front of a “jury” of experts. All is documented at the *SenseHeritage*



platform, as a legacy to the next generation of students: to be inspired and constantly raise the bar of work quality.

## Topics and Guests

The 9 “lectures” are in fact 9 debates on 9 topics with two guests that come from diverse areas where memory is in action. The topics are: (1) Intro: How Come a Curator Died of Boredom, (2) Curiosity Kills, (3)

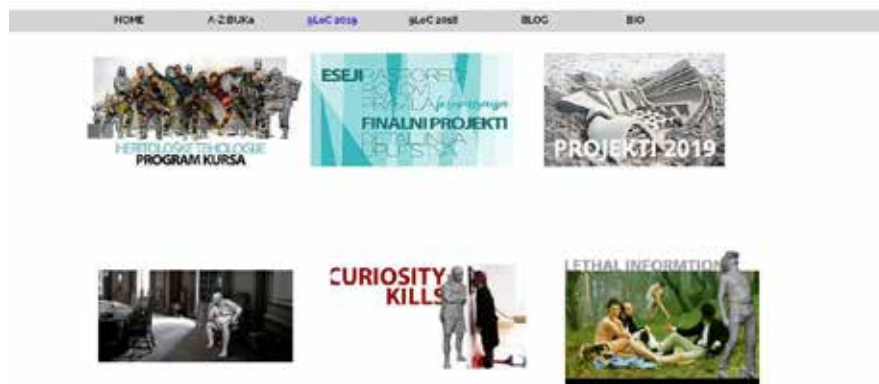
Lethal Information – Object or Context, (4) Famous (Dead) Author, (5) Freedom of Speech and Silent Voices, (6) Waiting for Godot?!, (7) The Unbearable Lightness of Managing, (8) Killing the Messenger! and (9) Surviving Responsibility.

The methodological emphasis is clearly on avoiding an *ex cathedra* approach. For each of the 9 subjects, there are two relevant guests: they are not only the representatives





Obevezno čitanje / Priprema za čas



of big institutions or projects, but also of current initiatives and innovative ways of thinking and implementing practical work. In three years (2016, 2018 and 2019), the lectures and debates were attended by the representatives of the National Museum Kraljevo, Belgrade, Kikinda, Smederevo, the Gallery of Matica Srpska, National Library of Serbia, National Museum Šabac, Ethnographic Museum in Belgrade, Mu-

seum of Yugoslavia, Museum of African Art, Open air museum "Old Village" in Sirogojno, Belgrade City Museum, Museum of Contemporary Art Vojvodina, Museum of Science and Technology, Museum of Rudnik and Takovo Region, Contemporary Art Gallery Subotica, and – still struggling to survive at the time – the Cultural Center of Požega. In addition to the institutional, museum representatives, the course was

also enhanced by the representatives of the Institute of Ethnography SASA (Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts), Creative Europe Serbia, Kolarac People's University, Independent Cultural Scene of Serbia, Europa Nostra Serbia, European Center for Culture and Debate – Cultural Center Grad, Center for rehabilitation through imagination, "Roof Over One's Head" group of activists, virtual Museum of Corruption, and of the Workers' Museum "Trudbenik". A great contribution in passing of knowledge and skills was also made by the female authors of the project "Life and Death of a Hero – There Cannot Be Neutrality"; the director of drama "BetonMaHala"; the author of the Maison Barili exhibition; the cultural editor at RTV Serbia the editor of the SeeCult portal; the author of the platform "Criticism at Work"; the author of the anthropological novel "Plum Tea" and digital strategist of the London Google; the cultural attaché of the US embassy in Serbia; high school students – the authors of the exhibition "The Young Choose" at the Gallery of Matica Srpska; a representative of the Norwegian Institute for Science and Technology and the author of the virtual Dance Museum; the city councilor for culture; the female representatives of the European Museum Forum and of the Forum of Slavic Countries; female rangers and designers of the professional platform Museum Unbound.

### Pool of New Ideas

Final students' projects in the form of online content and a public presentation always generate special excitement because their quality is evaluated by three professionals and the students themselves. In that way, there is no atmosphere of a classical exam and the stress associated with it, and also a sense of a certain initiation into the real world with different rules is created. At the same time, the topics that are brought up and the content available to everybody serve as a kind of documentation about what lies within the sight and in the system of values of the generations to come, what are the means and aesthetic of communication, working ethics. The titles themselves indicate the field of action and the value framework: ArTinder; Museum of Superstition; Memories.yu; What is Your Fear?; Archaeology of Modernity; International Romances; Museum of Forgotten Things; Closed Door; Commercialization of Art; BeoGraf; How to Get Lost in the Louvre; Life in a Folder; Film and Protest; Click for the Archeology; Dirty Work; Watch Out! Heritage.

# Say yes to the dress!

Is fashion main "ingredient" for the successful museum show?  
Does fashion makes museums appear relevant and appealing to contemporary society?  
Right questions for the fashion museologists and fashion curators as the new  
professional profiles of the 21st century museology

Text: Stefan Žarić / Photos: Metropolitan Museum of Arts, Victoria and Albert Museum

In 2019, The International Council of Museums (ICOM) is searching for a new definition of museum - the definition which would include recent theoretical and practical considerations and social and geopolitical frameworks of the present day as well. Thus words inclusion, democracy, polyphony, conflict, equality, and diversity lay at the core of the newly proposed museum definition. All of these terms could be applied to fashion as well, which ICOM's Costume Committee recognizes as an integral aspect of cultural heritage of humanity and museology praxis overall.

Even though the Committee was founded back in 1962, fashion museology and fashion curatorial are terms rather characteristic of the new museology, particularly museology practices of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Dealing with the problematic of fashion museology as the aspect of the new museology Danish fashion museologist Marie Riegels Melchior in *Fashion and Museums: Theory and Practice* states that "fashion makes museums appear relevant and appealing to contemporary so-

ciety." A look into this year's production of fashion exhibitions shows that this statement is not far from the truth. In March this year, The Art Newspaper proclaimed The Costume Institute's annual fashion show – *Heavenly Bodies: Fashion and Catholic Imagination* – as the most visited exhibition of 2018. As statistic shows, almost 1,700 million visitors, being 11,000 per day, visited the show – more than double in comparison to exhibitions of fine arts. Speaking of the current fashion exhibitions, London's Victoria and Albert Museum broke all the records with *Dior: Designer of Dreams* exhibition by selling out the show months in advance and even prolonging it by popular demand.

Regarding these statistics, *The Art Newspaper* published the article *A dash of fashion and a pinch of gratis: the perfect recipe for a sell-out show*, making fashion the main "ingredient" for a successful exhibition. When a renowned platform whose name contains the term "art" (the word in Serbian museology exclusively reserved for fine art) states fashion as the key of success and profit, we can

conclude that a good part of global museology is on the grounds of the new museology, and more importantly, that it conquers those grounds successfully. Fashion has entered museums, whether those whose primary activity is preserving and exhibiting fashion or traditional museum of fine or applied arts and design (for example Thierry Mugler's exhibition at the Museum of Fine Arts in Montreal), and as it seems it plans on staying in museums without showing the intention of leaving.

However, from the museology point of view the more important fact is that "a lot of fashion houses now have their own archives because they've realized the importance of having that legacy and that there's an interest in the history of the house" as stated by *The Financial Times* in their article *The Growing Popularity of Fashion Exhibitions*. Such institutions (or better heritage houses) like Musée Yves Saint Laurent Paris and the Fondation Pierre Bergé - Yves Saint Laurent or Armani Silos Museum archive, catalog, document, research and present (all the activities



Dior fashion exhibition  
in the V&A Museum





The Costume Institute's annual fashion show – *Heavenly Bodies: Fashion and Catholic Imagination*

performed by a regular museum) both historical and contemporary fashion production of fashion houses they're dedicated to. As such, these institutions are becoming active determinates of fashion museology, raising awareness of preserving, contextualizing, and actualizing of both past and present fashions.

Given such context, Riegels Melchior talks about the so called "division of labor" within fashion museology, which includes an academic fashion theorist, a museum curator and a fashion curator. The first, as the author finds, delivers the analysis, the second keeps the collection, and the third installs the show. As a museum specialized in fashion doesn't yet exist in Serbia whereas existing museums store fashion artifacts in collections of textiles and costume, such division of labor is often nonexistent in the country or carried out by art historians or more often, ethnologists. Academic curricula of these disciplines either do not offer a theoretical nor historical insight in fashion studies or in broader sense design (such is the case with the Department of Art History at the Belgrade University) or they offer a focused positioning of fashion as an aspect of material and consumerist culture (Department of Ethnology and Anthropology at the same university). The study program

in Theory and Culture of Fashion at the Faculty of Textile Technology at the University of Zagreb, could serve as a good example of affirming fashion museology and fashion studies overall in the region, as the program offers a course in fashion museology.

On the other side, the national museology is hence closer to what Riegels Melchior defines as dress / costume museology – the museology occupied with the materiality of the artifacts and its placement in the museum's collection rather than with creating a unique experience among visitors through a spectacular show. The ideal approach is of course the one that incorporates both practices, typical for museums like Victoria and Albert and the Costume Institute. Preservation of textile objects and their exhibiting requires specific and often restrictive technical and technological conditions and costly equipments unavailable to national museums, which can be seen as one of the reasons for the lack or short duration of fashion exhibitions in the country. The bigger problem however is minimal presence of fashion in education, and as such the problem of mobility of local professionals. Fashion museology has not yet reached an admirable level of inclusion which would democratize the discipline globally. As such, fashion museology is dictated by western

countries, particularly the USA and the UK, whether through publications, exhibitions or conferences. Study programs, symposia, and any other forms of professional development in fashion studies which would train Serbian curators, professors, researchers, and students in theoretical, historical or museology facets of fashion are as such unavailable to them in most of the cases.

Given aforementioned considerations, it is important to state that this year's grant for young professionals of the Costume Committee which enables the participation at the ICOM General Conference in Kyoto, Japan, was for the first time awarded to a Serbian participant. In the era of cultural appropriation and growing xenophobia, such act speaks of further destabilization of western-centrist norms of fashion museology, accentuating the creative and cultural potential of fashion summed up in the Conference's theme: Museums as cultural hubs – the future of tradition. The potential which overcomes imposed borders – whether disciplinary or geopolitical – and contributes to the visibility of Serbia globally and of one global discipline in the country. The future will certainly show do we respect the tradition, or shall we let the British claim Bernat Klein and Rok-sanda Ilinčić.

# Defense of tradition

Fashion shows, exhibitions, workshops, lectures and panel discussions marked the third edition of Etnology Fest. The country in focus was Romania and a special emphasis was laid on making a stronger bond between traditional craftsmen and fashion industry under the slogan "Defense of Tradition"

Text and Photos: Super Star Culture Agency

## Inspiration or theft - Defense of heritage

While the evening program of the Etnology Fest featured fashion shows, all throughout the three festival days there were workshops, lectures and panels. The event that definitely stood out was the panel discussion *Inspiration or Theft – Defense of Tradition*, held on 30<sup>th</sup> May. A frequent search for inspiration in intangible heritage by respectable fashion companies, and an even more frequent practice of fashion designers to sign as "authors" of a creation based on the tradition of ethnic groups whose heritage has not been explored enough, served as a topic for dialogue held by Andreea Tanasescu, founder of the *La Blouse Roumaine* community; Tamara Ognjević, M.A., ICOM Serbia Vice-president and director of Artis Centre; Stefan Žarić, fashion historian, member of ICOM Costume Committee; and Olivera Ćirković, attorney-at-law from Veselinović Law Office. The panel moderator was a distinguished journalist Branka Kovačević, author of the book "How to Become a Style Icon: Belgrade Ladies Know". Presenting the case study of the Romanian blouse, which famous designers, such as Tom Ford, attempted to claim as their own creation, as well as the one when Dior fashion house tried to appropriate the original cultural heritage of the Romanian village of Bihor, Andreea Tanasescu showed the way to run an efficient campaign against such cases of abuse through modern media, particularly through social networks. Her presentation served as a platform for quite an interesting dialogue which actively engaged the audience as well. The participants contemplated the ways to protect intangible cultural heritage and stressed the importance of joint efforts aimed at achieving better visibility of cultural heritage.

In late May, the Serbian Army House in Belgrade hosted the third Etnology Fest. At the opening ceremony, the guests were welcomed by the orchestra of the Serbian Ministry of Defense "Stanislav Binički" and the "Kolo" ensemble choir who performed traditional compositions *Svilen konac* (Silken Thread) and *Oj,*

*Moravo, moje selo ravno* (Hey Morava, My Village in the Plains). In her opening address, the First Lady of Serbia, Tamara Vučić, the festival's honorary patron, noted among other things: "Our tangible and intangible cultural heritage is an impressive national identification card of our country in the world. As a society, it is our duty and





## Etnology people exhibition

From 3<sup>rd</sup> to 24<sup>th</sup> June, the plateau in front of the Cvijeta Zuzorić Art Pavilion hosted a photo exhibition *Etnology People*, as a kind of the Etnology Fest follow-up. The exhibition displayed a series of photographs by master photographer Gabriel Motica (Romania); Pavel Surovi, photographer and director of the Kisač Cultural Centre; Jelena Janaković, art photographer and member of the "Kolo" ensemble creative team; and Nebojša Babić, one of the leading photographers in Serbia, with inspiration for women, national costumes and jewelry from Turkmenistan – guests of last year's Etnology Fest.



Opening ceremony

obligation to preserve and present its wealth and diversity.”

Since Romania was the country in the spotlight of this year's Etnology Fest, Oana Cristina Popa, the Romanian ambassador to Serbia, and Andreea Tanasescu, the founder of the La Blouse Roumaine community, officially opened the festival together with Goga Grubješić, Etnology Fest director and founder, by traditionally cutting the red ribbon. The programme included an exclusive fashion show *Ethno Couture: Serbs in the Region and Serbia*, featuring elaborate folk costumes, and a designer fashion show authored by Ivanka Jevtović *Memory – Sadness and Beauty*, inspired by Serbian heroines of the Great War.

## The Magic of Romanian Blouse

The second day of the festival was focused on Romania and its intangible heritage. The programme was opened with a cheerful Romanian song *Dragu-mi la veselie*, performed by Simona Miclescu, Representative of the UN Secretary-General and Head of the UN Office in Belgrade, after which Oana-Cristina Popa, Romanian ambassador to Serbia, held an excellent speech about cultural diplomacy. She drew particular attention to the story about the Romanian traditional blouse – *La Blouse Roumaine* – which emerged on the Danube banks over a hundred years ago and grew into a symbol of Romania, recognized all around the modern world. This remarkable clothing item, enlisted as the intangible cultural heritage of our neighbours, gained world recognition particularly thanks to Andreea Tanasescu, the founder of the *La Blouse Roumaine* community, who organized a unique international campaign in the social media through which she not only promoted, but also protected the Romanian blouse brand that had often been borrowed by famous fashion designers as their “original” creation.

Two exclusive fashion shows – *Ethno Couture Romania* and *La Blouse Roumaine* – de-

lighted the audience with the lavish beauty of the Romanian folk costume and also with contemporary creations inspired by this tradition. At the end of the evening, multimedia artist Simonida Stanković performed the song *Dobro je vino Djurdjevo* (Djurdje's Fine Wine).

## The Luxury of Diversity

On the closing night of the Etnology Fest, the audience enjoyed the lavish kaleidoscope of the cultural heritage of Vojvodina's national minorities. A young artist Alisa Oravec from Pančevo, member of the Slovakian ethnic music group “Marienfeld”, opened the closing night with a dance performance and a song *Volju njemam* (I Have No Will). Dragana Milošević, Provincial Secretary for Culture, and Paul-Henri Presset, Head of communications of the EU delegation in

Serbia, addressed the audience. Referring to the importance of cherishing different forms of cultural heritage, both speakers noted the significant role culture had as a mediator in dialogues between nations, with festivals such as Etnology Fest being invaluable in the process.

Two fashion shows were held – *Ethno Couture: National Minorities of Vojvodina* and “Bulka” clothing brand. No words can describe the luxury of various folk costumes of Romanians, Bunjevci, Montenegrins, Croats, Romani, Hungarians, Slovaks and other national minorities in Vojvodina

(there are as many as 26!), or the excellent design of the “Bulka” brand inspired exactly by this heritage.

The evening ended with the performance of a young gusle player Isak Banović who drew long applause from the enthusiastic audience.



# Sweet taste of heritage

The Museum of Spoon Sweets - the Cvetić Family House is a unique museum of intangible cultural heritage, conceived as a combination of gastronomic heritage and practices inherent to Serbian urban areas

Text: Lidija and Marina Cvetić / Photos: Artis Center

The tradition of serving spoon sweets (fine fruit preserves) in Serbian civic houses is over 200 years old, and has been preserved at the Cvetić family house in Kraljevo until today. The Cvetić Family House dates from 1908. It was built by Filip Cvetić, a respectable wine trader from Kraljevo. It was designed in the reduced secession style and ornamented with wall murals in the *al secco* technique by master Janko Drumski from Vojvodina. While male family members occupied themselves primarily with trade and construction, women paid special attention to the household and to making fine spoon sweets which first appeared on the market in Kraljevo, in the colonial goods store “Dimitrijević-Cvetić”, founded immediately after World War I. The conceptual design of the Museum of Spoon Sweets, dedicated to intangible cultural heritage, was devised in cooperation with the National Museum in Kraljevo, in September 2016. The theme of the European Heritage Days, symbolically titled *Heritage and Communities – Living with Heritage* in 2016, inspired our personal engagement in order to articulate the place occupied by family heritage in the discourse of local histories and cultural practices. By exploring tradition and symbolism of serving spoon sweets in Serbia, along with the history of everyday life in the Cvetić Family House, we have found that non-material artefacts of the past require a dialogue with today’s cultural practices. The Cvetić Family House is a witness of many historic events and cultural changes. Encouraged by the fact that our family has been living in this home continually (for 110 years), guarding and revitalizing its authenticity, in 2018 – as the year of cultural heritage – we dared to expand our activities and shape them into a complete cultural and tourist offering.

What the Museum of Spoon Sweets emphasizes is the *dynamic* character of its programme structure. It implies discovering, contextualizing and (re)interpreting of mostly intangible



The Cvetić Family House in Kraljevo

cultural heritage. The collection itself is not very large. It consists of just a few hundred small objects: household items made of glass and china for serving spoon sweets, wine, brandy and coffee, sorted by various style periods from the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> until the end of 20<sup>th</sup> century. Visitors are free to choose

or assemble themselves a unique collection from which they wish to be served, including a variety of spoon sweets they wish to taste. Instead of being displayed in a museum cabinet, the jars are lined up on top of a closet, where it used to be kept a century ago. Of the authentic family items, only a few have been preserved



so far. They were of no great material value for those who came to live in the house after World War II (wheat bowl, candlestick for family patron's day, the icon of St. Mrata, iron ewer, vintage coffee grinder and roaster, and a few photographic portraits of the founders.) Nothing else survived the postwar years, and neither did the famous Filip's wine cellar. But there is still something that is being renewed each year: the old fruit and flower varieties in the backyard of the house, from which we prepare, over and over again, the almost forgotten delicacy of urban Serbian families – *spoon sweets*. It symbolizes the duration of one family, the history of civic life, and even culture as a whole.

The Cvetić Family House represents the hub of local cultural dialogue, with a focus on traditional elements, but only to the extent that they really communicate with the present social moment. The programmes are designed to educate visitors about the value of common cultural heritage (motivating them to become its *guardians* too), and – in a wider sense – to personally reexamine or maybe reactivate certain patterns of everyday life of Serbian citizens in modern times. Thus we have – in an authentic environment of a house from the late 19<sup>th</sup> century – restored the tradition of *Slava* (family's patron saint's day), which we have completely documented in cooperation with the National Museum in Kraljevo. This old civic custom has been proposed for the national list of intangible cultural heritage, along with the filigree craft in Kraljevo. We have also authored a short film which supports this proposition.

### Memory Room

One of the most notable programmes that we have created is entitled *The Memory Room*. With this experimental programme, designed for the 2017 Museum Days, we wanted to examine the dialogue potential of our collection through an interactive relation of a visitor and the museum space. We treated the exhibition space as an open, dynamic form, which at one moment begins to act not as a space inside a museum (as an institution for preserving and displaying objects), but as an intimate space inside an observer. In the *Memory Room*, set up in the salon of the Cvetić Family House, through a number of associative tasks, messages and events, the audience is encouraged to invoke and record personal or family memories in an intimate atmosphere. Only one visitor could enter the museum space at a time, where he/she stayed for a limited period of time, completely isolated and without being interrupted. A certain amount of time was enough for the visitor to feel the space, look around it, use it at his sole discretion, use the objects, taste spoon sweets served only for



Spoon sweets

him/her, play a tune on the piano, grind coffee... in short, to feel comfortable and close to the items exhibited in the museum space for a given period of time. Since the museum is dedicated to non-material heritage, which is elusive and sensitive as such, by offering this kind of experience we wanted to test the limits of space of such a museum. We wondered whether an observer can also begin to feel it as his/her intimate space, which sparks memories and brings back places of remembrance within his/her mind. And what place might that be where the barrier of that which is exhibited is removed, allowing the performative – so present in the non-material – to emerge. We also tried to record that barrier physically and make a documentary footage of the dialogue between a visitor – as an active creator – and a pre-organized formal space – museum. In a specially arranged visit to the *Memory Room*, each visitor gets an instruction to leave some personal trace, so that his memories or practice is saved as a part of a common heritage related to the tradition of preparing and serving spoon sweets. In this way, we are building a

specific local archive of the intangible which is constantly growing.

*A nice opportunity for a person to go back to some old times and recall smells and tastes which one does not get a chance to feel nowadays. Being all alone in a quiet room with music playing softly, I really remembered my childhood days spent in this street... – a message one of the visitors left in the book of sweet memories.* Our wish is to place the heritage which we as a family keep as close as possible to the observer, and also to provoke a dialogue which is often hidden behind suppressed circumstances. In the Museum of Spoon Sweets one can personally leave items which match the collection, exchange them, try recipes, or organize individual thematic visits.

The Museum of Spoon Sweets at the Cvetić Family House in Kraljevo is important for many reasons. The space of the family museum that inherits *living heritage* has been established as an interactive spot of cultural dialogue, both at the local level and at a level of intercultural presentation and exchange. Organized as a self-sustained concept, supported by authentic and living heritage and its heirs, the Museum of Spoon Sweets represents a direct source that helps research and understanding of Serbian civic culture as an important element of national identity. Through their continuous educational programmes, the Cvetić Family House also communicates with the youngest visitors who are able to learn here about the importance of preserving common heritage. Marking the year of cultural heritage, as members of the Old Serbian Houses (Stare kuće Srbije) / European Historic Houses Association (EHHA) and the programme *My House – Your Heritage*, we have focused exactly on elementary school children as the youngest, responsible heirs to whom we leave all this for the future.







Seminar participants

## Hyperconnected museums - challenges of modern communication

The National Committee of ICOM Serbia in cooperation with the Regional Alliance of ICOM SEE and the National Committees of ICOM Macedonia and ICOM Bosnia and Herzegovina at the Institute for the Study of Cultural Development in Belgrade from 18-19. October 2018, organized a two-day, regional seminar on digital communication in museums

Text: Slavko Spasić / Photos: ICOM Serbia

In addition to the training that included improving the visibility of museum sites, creating digital content, strategically managing social networks, the importance of museum applications, participants presented the realized programs, applications and internet presentations of museums from Serbia and the region as examples of good practice in order to exchange acquired knowledge and experiences.

While opening the Regional Seminar, Dejan Masliković, Assistant Minister of Culture for the development of digital research infrastructure in the field of culture and art, underscored that museums must constantly adapt to the modern needs of the contemporary man and at the same time take heed not to jeopardize the protection of the heritage they are responsible for.

Through examples of good practice, joint activities of local communities and cultural institutions, events and similar programmes, the Seminar illustrated the importance of presenting museums and cultural institutions using modern communication tools, as well as their contribution to the development of identity at both the regional and national levels.

On the first day of the Seminar, partici-





pants were given the answer to the question: *How to improve organic visibility of museum websites on Google?* by Dr Nataša Krstić, Associate Professor at the Faculty of Media and Communication. If museum webpages are not visible to search engine crawlers due to some technical factors, not relevant to user queries due to the absence of keyword strategy, and not authoritative with backlinks from referrals and follower engagement on social media, their online visibility would be low. In that respect, SEO is defined as the implementation of practices aimed at making the websites friendly to search engine crawlers and improving their visibility on the search engine results pages. Google and its various domains (Scholar, Images, News, Arts & Culture etc.) can drive today more traffic to museum websites and digital repositories than any other source.

For that reason, a training related to SEO best-practices for cultural institutions, combined with actual theory and examples



Lectures



Case studies

was organized by ICOM Serbia, which provided participants with a solid understanding on how to make improvements which can boost the organic visibility of their museum websites on search engines and increase website traffic.

The theme of the second day of the seminar were museum applications and lecturer was Julija Bašić, art historian, founder of the NGO Art District. Even though many world-famous museums keep up with the latest trends regards digital technology and mobile app development, using it as a regular channel to communicate with their users, we shall say that museums are not the ones who should be changing its mission and vision to comfort digital world. The museum always has to bear in mind its direction and goal, and digital technology is another tool to accomplish that idea, not otherwise.

The Seminar offered some innovative methods in management and presentation of cultural heritage that should certainly

be supported and implemented, adapted to local circumstances, wherever possible.

The Seminar has unambiguously shown the significance of continuous education of museum professionals, as well as the need to continue exchanging experiences in the region through conferences and seminars which will further strengthen and enhance the quality of regional cooperation, as it is indispensable for fulfilling the goals of the museum sector to the benefit of local communities and society as a whole.

ICOM was again recognized as the networking foundation and educational center for museum professionals, while the area of Western Balkans, with its cultural-historical connections, was seen as a place of convergence of expert capacities and education of museum professionals.

Following an analysis of evaluation questionnaires, the Seminar was graded 4.9, which speaks of the success of the Project.

# Explosion of creative energy

In early December last year, Artis Center and the Historical Museum of Serbia organized a seminar titled *Museum and Communication: Knowledge, Skills and Tools*. Colleagues from all over Serbia – Belgrade, Novi Sad, Vrbas, Prokuplje, Raška, Kragujevac, Kraljevo, Vršac, Trstenik, Kruševac, Požarevac, Tršić, Sremska Mitrovica, Pančevo and Negotin were glad to accept the invitation to participate in this even

Text: Tamara Ognjević / Photos: Vuk Nenezić, VR Photo team

**M**useum and Communication pilot seminar was first launched in Novi Sad in 2015 as a cooperation of Artis Center and ICOM Serbia, with museum partners at the time being the Gallery of Matica Srpska and Pavle Beljanski Memorial Collection, while Color Press Group was the media partner. ICOM Serbia recognized once again the need for staging this kind of educational programme by giving it full support. The Serbian Ministry of Culture and Information sponsored the event, showing in this way its appreciation of the tendencies in new museology and, in particular, that it kept pace with global processes which inevitably involved redefining the role of museums as well – from the keepers of cultural heritage to community leaders.

The seminar started with an expert interpretation of the exhibition held in the Historical Museum of Serbia – *The End of the Great War 1917–1918*, given by Dr Dušica Bojić, director of the Historical Museum of Serbia, and her team. The complex exhibition *The End of the Great War 1917–1918*, the last segment of a major exhibition project marking the centenary of World War I, represented the toughest communication challenge for the seminar participants who were given – as part of their workshop activities – the task to create on their own some accompanying programs for this exhibition scheduled to last until the end of 2019.



Presentation of the accompanying programs for *The End of the Great War 1917–1918* exhibition as part of the seminar tasks

This time, the program included three work blocks – 1) a presentation of good communication practices and strategies, and a glimpse at modern museum trends; 2) practical workshops, and 3) a round-table discussion focused on the museum theatre as a particular “tool” for communicating heritage, but also for a better interaction with the audience.

The seminar participants had a chance to learn about the experiences of the Gallery of Matica Srpska and the Museum of Naïve and Marginal Art involving the possible means

of museum communication. Dr Snežana Mišić, museum adviser and programme director at the Gallery of Matica Srpska, presented a case study titled *Gallery of Matica Srpska: a Possible Model of Communication Strategy*, while Nina Krstić, M.A., director of the Museum of Naïve and Marginal Art in Jagodina, spoke about the production of their own museum publication within a case study *Museum Magazine: How, Why and for Whom?*

With his lecture titled *Museum Performance and Museum Performances: from the Audience to the Co-creator*, Dr Nikola Krstović, research associate of the Center for Museology and Heritage Studies at the Faculty of Philosophy in Belgrade, drew attention to the tendencies in new museology which were as important for communicating museum collections, exhibitions and programs as for the ideas underlying the messages a museum wished to send to the audience. Dr Krstović's great experience in observing at first hand museum practices worldwide, combined with an appealing form of his presentation, clearly acted as a great incentive for the participants who were to create on their own some accompanying programs for

## Museum and Communication to be held in Kruševac this year

The third seminar titled *Museum and Communication: Cultural Heritage and the Town* is scheduled to take place in Kruševac in mid-November 2019 as a cooperation project of Artis Center and the National Museum Kruševac. This time, the focus will be placed on the relation between the museum and the town, movable and immovable heritage, that is, cultural landscape, and on communication models equally involving the audience and the local administration with the aim of creating museum programmes. The participants will have the opportunity to hear about the experiences of some of the most successful museum managers in the country and the representatives of the local administration and tourist organization. Once again, the event will be sponsored by the Ministry of Culture and Information of the Republic of Serbia.





Workshop



Round table

*The End of the Great War 1917–1918* exhibition on the following day.

Dr Nikola Krstović's lecture served as kind of introduction to a round-table discussion *I Also Like Theatre* – a dialogue about museum theatre which gathered Eliana Gavrilović, M.A. (Museum of Vuk and Dositej / National Museum in Belgrade), Dragan Kiurski, M.A. (National Museum, Kikinda), Branka Conić (The House of Jevrem Grujić), Dr Nikola Krstović (Center for Museology and Heritage Studies at the Faculty of Philosophy in Belgrade), Dr Dušica Bojić and Nenad Beljinac, M.A. (Historical Museum of Serbia), and Tamara Ognjević, M.A. (Artis Center), as a moderator. Since the museums in Serbia can practically be considered leaders in the region regarding the use of museum theatre for interpretation and communication purposes, it was most exciting to hear about the experiences shared by the round-table participants coming from the institutions which were already applying various forms of museum theatre. The discussion that followed was equally interesting. In cooperation with VR Photo Team, Artis Center made sure that the seminar was available to the public via live stream on social media.

The second day of the *Museum and Communication* seminar featured workshops preceded by introductory lectures given by a longtime newspaper editor and journalist Ljubomir Tošković (Artis Center) – *How to "Handle" Media* – and by Tamara Ognjević, M.A., director of Artis Center – *Museum and PR: from a Project to the Public – Key Steps in Creating a Media Campaign*. Ljubomir Tošković explained how media work and why journalists are also only humans, described the current media scene in Serbia and offered the reasons why museums should not give up on publishing information, even in the media which are not overly keen on culture. He also touched on how information is made available to the public and how to hold the attention of the media.

With her address on the most important steps in a PR campaign, Tamara Ognjević actually guided the seminar attendees into their first project task – creating accompany-

ing programs for *The End of the Great War 1917–1918* exhibition. Exactly this part of the *Museum and Communication* seminar was its most interesting feature, the fruitful result of the intensive two-day communication. Based on a teamwork concept since the participants were divided into five groups after a draw decided on who joined which group, and on public speaking training recorded by VR Photo Team cameras, this part of the seminar showed how much creativity, energy and freedom museum professionals in Serbia had. The results exceeded all expectations with a successfully improvised press conference and quite an exciting critical exchange of opinions and impressions.

In order to get a clear picture of how demanding was the task the museum and cultural professionals had to complete, suffice it to say that they only had an hour and a half to give shape to their ideas, film a report relevant to the subject exhibition (three minutes maximum! – we actually discussed in detail about the undeniable attention deficit disorder affecting contemporary audiences and why it was important to keep the reports concise and not to make endless video and audio announcements), provide a description of what they did and prepare a press release for the programs they created.

This was truly an amazing experience. The Historical Museum of Serbia welcomed several valuable suggestions regarding programs that might accompany the exhibition which faces a challenging task of engaging the audience throughout the year!

The official part of the seminar ended with the presentation of certificates and a small cocktail party where we were served the famous "Zmajeviti" (Dragon-like) red wine made from the grapes of Prokupac variety, produced by Artis' long-standing partner and sponsor "Despotika" winery, matched with dark chocolate cherry balls, an exquisite dessert made by Artis' associate Dragana Vasić from Kruševac. For the entire seminar, we enjoyed the coffee and snacks provided by "Soko Štark", while the fantastic catering was done by Pančevo-based "Poco Loco".

As a final touch, Artis new museum partner, the House of Jevrem Grujić in Belgrade, gave the seminar participants a special treat – an exclusive guided tour of an exhibition dedicated to Milena Pavlović Barili, *The Magical Milena*, followed by a mandatory tasting of Queen Natalie's cake, made to the original recipe dating from the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century when Natalie of Serbia (Natalija Obrenović) used to be a frequent guest in the House of Jevrem Grujić.



Participants of the seminar in the Historical Museum of Serbia.

# Redefining

It surely isn't easy to keep up with the times we live in. We are facing constant changes and a huge pressure to adapt to them, particularly in terms of the amount and content of information produced and received by today's global society on a daily basis. If we tried to illustrate this in words, the closest description might be a never-ending storm of information literally throwing us against the high seas of information, often conflicting and of high intensity – a good way for an individual or even entire systems to find themselves disoriented, with no compass and proper navigation. It seems that something similar has happened to the efforts aimed at redefining the museum, the process which ICOM initiated some time ago and put in place a Standing Committee on the Museum Definition, Prospects and Potentials (MDPP) to that end.

A well-conceived initiative which started a series of activities – first of all, many round table discussions and debates on the new museum definition (ICOM Serbia organized one of those round table discussions on 18<sup>th</sup> May 2018) – has recently given birth to a proposal on the new museum definition which, judging by the reactions of several national and international committees and regional alliances, has not met the expectations of great many museum professionals worldwide! On the contrary, many of them are wondering where have the museum and its basic functions actually disappeared in this proposal full of appealing, quite modern clichés (democratization, polyphony, inclusion, participativeness, etc.), echoing in harmony with the above mentioned storm of information and the vocabulary of modern, mainly populist politics.

Just to remind ourselves – a museum is an institution which basically acquires, researches, conserves and exhibits cultural and natural heritage. Fundamentally, it is a public, non-profit institution with a primary task of being accessible to all profiles of audience and an obligation to present its collections in a precise, professional and scientifically proven manner. How will a museum interpret the content displayed for the audience depends as much on the museum policy as on the creativity of museum professionals. Is the museum leader in the culture of its community? Well, it has always been like that, so it isn't really clear what exactly the idea about the supposed need for cultural leadership of the museum wishes to emphasize? Should and can the museum influence politics? For some reason, theorists of modern museology keep forgetting that museums all over the world act in the settings of different cultural policies which are directly or indirectly strategically shaped by politicians who manage state and political systems. That is indeed a basic premise for contemplating the degree of dependence or independence of the museum. The often posed question as to whether the museum should meddle in politics is, in fact, the essence hindering the process of redefining the museum, or rather, the process of improving its existing, very precise definition. Personally, I think that museum professionals need to take a more active approach in creating strategies in culture and cultural policies, to influence the shaping of public policies relevant for cultural and natural heritage, and by doing so they influence the position of museums and related institutions. On the other hand, the museum should keep its distance from the daily politics since it is a position giving the museum undisputed credibility and the kind of soft power that makes the museum invaluable. Having this in mind, we might as well ask the question: "What exactly are we redefining as far as the museum is concerned?"

*Tamara Ognjević*

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